

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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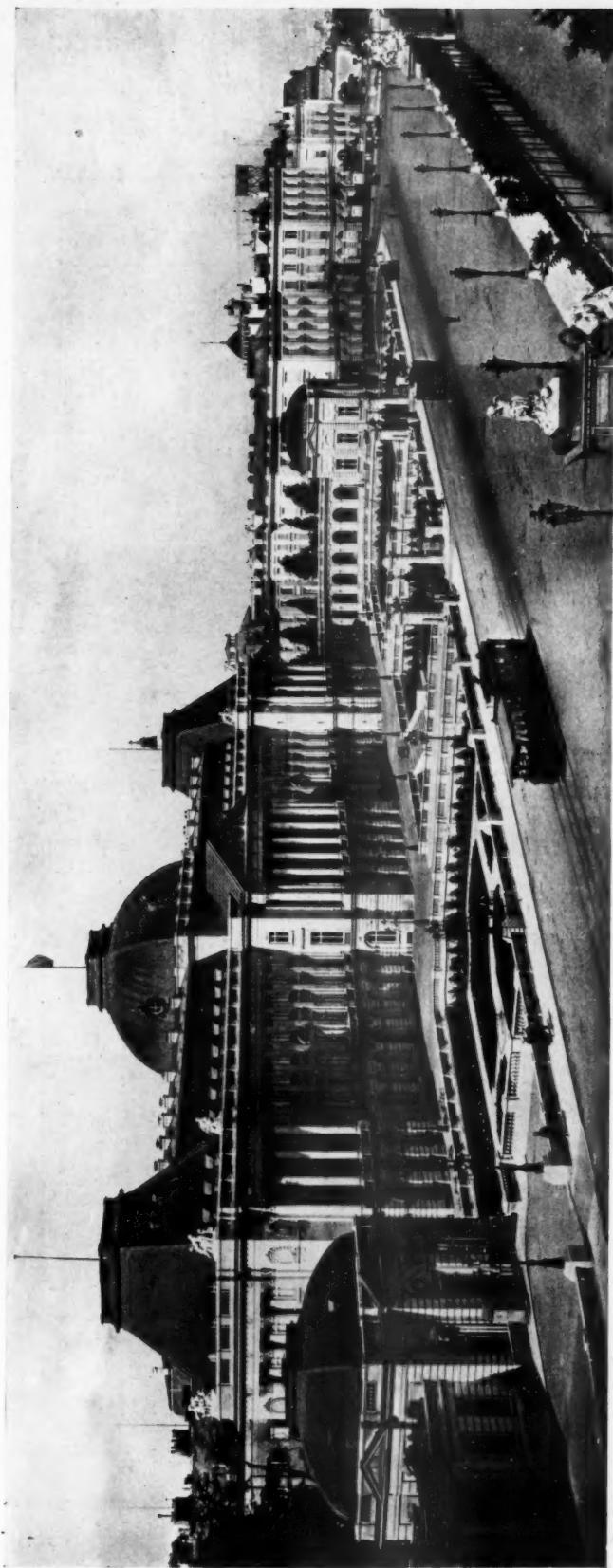
SEPTEMBER 1912 . . . . .

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This building, standing in the small Universitäts-Platz, was erected in 1755. It is interesting not only as an architectural design, but as an example of sculpture applied to architecture

THE OLD UNIVERSITY (NOW THE ACADEMY  
OF SCIENCES), VIENNA



THE NEW ROYAL PALACE, BRUSSELS. H. MAQUET, ARCHITECT

## LEOPOLD II AND BRUSSELS\*

BY PATRICK ABERCROMBIE

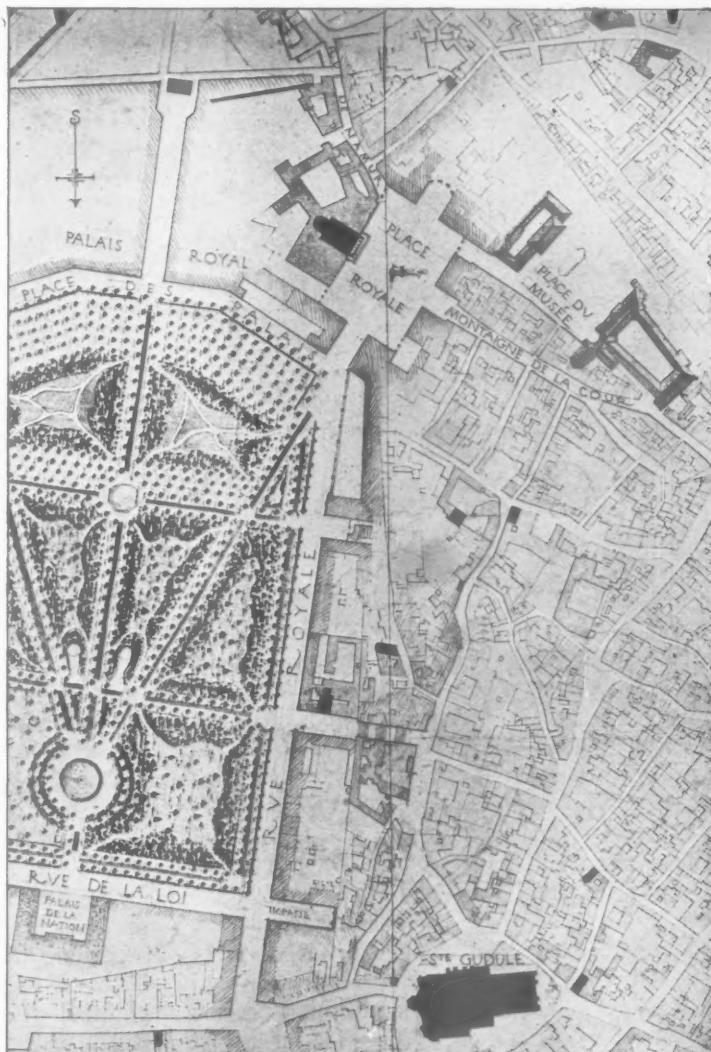


T is not generally known in this country that Leopold II, late King of the Belgians, was a mighty builder. It may be questioned if the method by which he came by his great wealth was not rather that of a financier than a king, but there can be no doubt but that his spending was royal. In a country which is considerably more democratic than ours, and in which the Crown has no buttress of ancient tradition and unspoken prestige, the only engine left him for carrying out his wishes was wealth. Though he was intent upon beautifying Brussels, his work had not the backing of the nation at large; there was a kind of feeling abroad that here was a king whose office had been denied all real power, despotically building palaces, museums, arches of triumph, and even remodelling the face of their capital itself, as though he were a second Louis XIV—and all was possible and within constitutional limits because he happened to own vast personal wealth and chose to spend it in this way. They might abuse and thwart him, but they could not prevent him from spending his own money, and Brussels is left infinitely richer as a result of his constructive passion. Though during his long reign one of the greatest works of art of modern Europe, the Palais de Justice (1866–83), was built, the projects with which Leopold II was connected, intimately and financially, belonged to the last ten or twelve years of his life, during which time the face of Brussels has been greatly changed.

### PALAIS DU ROI

The first piece of achieved building which one notices is the most personal and the one which aroused the most furious opposition—the new Royal Palace. This part of Brussels, on the plateau overlooking the old town, was laid out by the French architect Guimard about the year 1775, and includes the Place Royale, Rue Royale, and the Parc (designed by Zinner). At the northern end of the Parc,

Guimard built the Palais de la Nation (now the Chambre des Représentants), which was burnt down in 1820 and reconstructed by Van der Straeten. Opposite to the pediment of this building, carrying on the axis of the central avenue of the Parc, the plan shows a street leading to a small pavilion or some such structure; the Royal Palace was to be placed on either side of this street. This forewent an admirable opportunity for a piece of logical town-planning, and accordingly Van der Straeten in 1820 built a central wing connecting these two portions and closing the central vista of the Parc: a portico was subsequently added by Suys. This palace possessed slender architectural distinction, and the bowed front of the Parc left an inadequate space for a ceremonial forecourt; Leopold II has re-



PLAN OF PART OF BRUSSELS ABOUT THE YEAR 1785, SHOWING THE PLATEAU LAID OUT BY GUIMARD, OVERLOOKING THE OLD TOWN

## LEOPOLD II AND BRUSSELS

modelled both, by the hand of his architect, the late M. Henri Maquet. The two extreme wings, one of them forming the left-hand entrance to the Place Royale, have been left as Guimard designed them; connected to them are small guard-houses, and set back within segmental arcades is the new palace, treated in a very sober Louis Seize manner. The photograph which is here reproduced, taken from the roof of the Palais des Académies, gives a somewhat better impression than the street view, owing to the fact that the ground, slightly rising to the east, produces an effect of squatness. By taking a straight line across from the outer angles of Guimard's pavilions, a forecourt was enclosed, treated as a sunk garden, in three parts; but more than this was required for the massing of crowds

## THE MONT DES ARTS AND RUE BRÉDERODE

Closely connected with the new palace were the ambitious schemes for remodelling areas on both sides of the Place Royale. On the upper side the narrow streets at the back of the palace garden were to be partly cleared away and a straight connection called the "Nouvelle Rue Bréderode" formed between the corner of the Place Royale and the Boulevards. The ancient Rue de Namur, a section of the old "chaussée" or high road from Ghent to Cologne, was preserved with its historic windings; but many new buildings (shaded dark on the plan opposite) were to face on to it, including the Ministries of the Congo and the Civil List. This scheme has remained a "project" on paper, and it is likely to remain so;



THE OLD PALACE

on great occasions. Accordingly M. Maquet cut off the bowed front of the Parc, leaving the two corner gateways, which indicate the angle of the bow, and re-erecting the central one. This curtailment of the Parc of Brussels raised an outcry of amazing fierceness, which was heard far beyond the borders of Belgium: and truly such an exquisite work of art—the most perfect town garden in existence—should not be rashly touched. But it must be confessed that the alteration can now hardly be detected, and there is the gain of the open space, particularly as it is crossed by the tram lines. The chief complaint was that the king had robbed the public of part of their park and had put it into his garden, but this forecourt garden is no private walk of his—it is for use by the eye only, and frankly as open to the town as the palace.

in fact, the new Rue Bréderode is hardly advisable —there is already enough traffic entering the Place Royale through the arcade at the corner (which it would be criminal to remove), and a new cross route should be taken farther up the Rue de la Régence.

The Mont des Arts was a dream which came much nearer to realisation, and which in some form or another may still be carried out. It was probably the scheme upon which Leopold most dearly set his heart; he went so far as to buy all the necessary land for it and present it to the State, expending thereon some two million sterling. The history of the group of museums is somewhat complicated. The plan of 1785 shows two isolated buildings which had been the residence of the Stadholder, Duke Charles of Lorraine; these were subsequently connected by a central wing in exact

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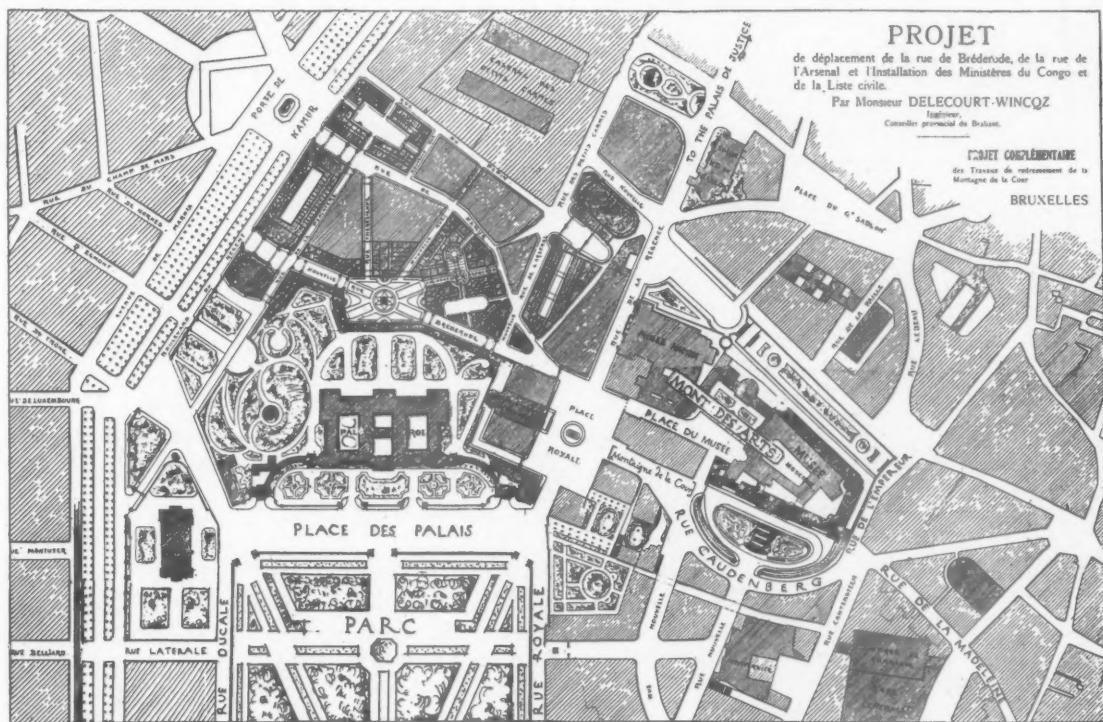
harmony of style, and in 1876 M. A. Balat built a new portion known as the Palais des Beaux-Arts, with a fine façade somewhat in the Cockerell manner, giving on to the Rue de la Régence: in this were placed the old pictures, in the central wing the royal library, and in the old lower palace the collection of modern art. With the exception of the front to the Rue de la Régence and the enclosed Place du Musée, these buildings were entirely hemmed in with houses, and it was

Leopold's intention to enclose the lower palace with a range of new galleries, and to isolate the whole of this "Mont des Arts" with gardens. The first block of houses, which was bought and demolished, faced on to the delightful steep picturesque streets which led from the Place Royale into the lower town: these streets, of which the Montaigne de la Cour was the best known, were doomed anyhow, in consequence of the vast scheme of remodelling which is being now carried



MODEL OF BUILDING FOR THE MONT DES ARTS, BY M. MAQUET

out just below the Rue Royale. M. Maquet in his project for the Mont des Arts showed the principal entrance to his new building on the axis of one of these new streets, with a garden in front enclosed by the crescent-shaped Rue Caudenberg, which took the place of the old Montaigne de la Cour. This garden-front looks well enough on plan, but has the fatal objection of the fall of the ground, which is nearly one hundred feet between the Place Royale and the Rue de l'Empereur:



PLAN SHOWING THE NEW PALAIS DU ROI, THE RUE BRÉDERODE PROJECT, AND THE MONT DES ARTS

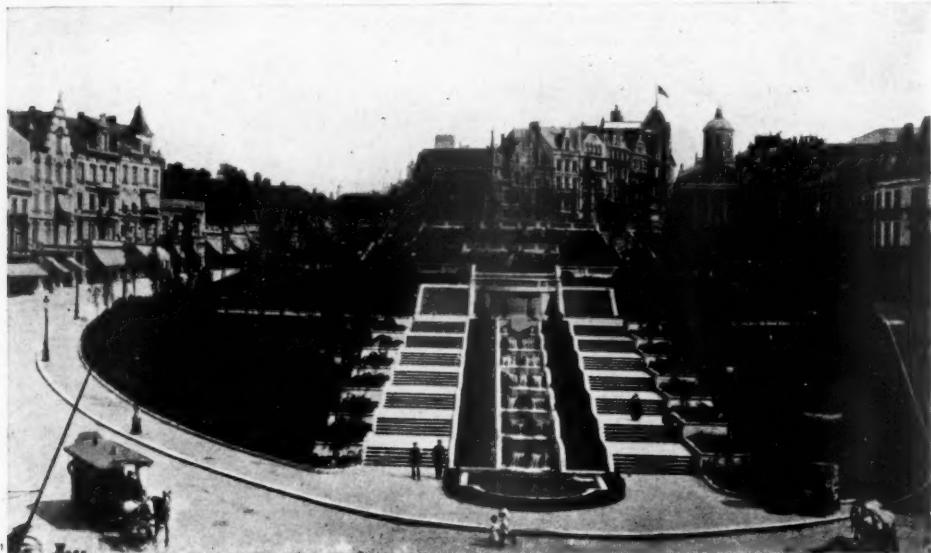
## LEOPOLD II AND BRUSSELS

the apparent symmetry of the garden would disappear in reality, and the colossal end façade, which a corner tower attempts to relieve, would overwhelm the lower town.

While the scheme was being discussed with the greatest eagerness and without much immediate prospect of arriving at an issue, owing to this difficulty of site and the great cost of the new building, the Exposition of 1910 was initiated, M. Maquet, the architect of the scheme, having died the year before. There, immediately off the Place Royale, was a ruin of demolished houses, and it was decided to do something provisionally. The French landscape architect M. Vacherot was called in, and a garden was designed and laid out, having its main axis in the direction of the fall of the ground. Though carried out in permanent

## THE ARC DU CINQUANTENAIRE

The Arc du Cinquantenaire was one of Leopold's several attempts to add to the beauty of Brussels by creating vistas to lead the eye from the centre of the town towards some distant monument. The street of approach was there already—the uninteresting Rue de la Loi which carried on the axis of the north side of the Parc in Guimard's plan. In 1880 an exhibition in honour of the jubilee of the kingdom of Belgium was held in a small park at the end of the Rue de la Loi, and the two great galleries were left standing, connected by a semicircular arcade of Ionic columns on a high base pierced by windows. Leopold conceived the idea of placing a triumphal arch in the middle of this arcade, and so converting an ordinary straight street into a monumental



THE GARDEN AT PRESENT OCCUPYING THE SPACE IN FRONT OF THE MONT DES ARTS

materials of stone and bronze, this garden with its cascade has something of a transitory exhibition look about it: this is perhaps due to the design, which is too abrupt a contrast from the restrained beauty of Guimard's Place Royale and Zinner's Parc. There is a saying in Brussels that "Rien ne dure plus longtemps que le provisoire," and now that Leopold II is dead, there is every possibility that this will prove another case of provisional duration.

The remodelling of streets just alluded to, and the new Central Railway Station—the most vehemently debated of all Brussels improvements—were undoubtedly suggested and encouraged by the late king; but these belong to the engineering rather than the architectural aspect of town planning: they have not the monumental character which is what we are chiefly concerned with.

vista, the rise in the ground adding greatly to the possibilities of the effect. The arch would serve a further purpose, indicating the existence of the new wide avenue continuing the Rue de la Loi to the old park of Tervueren, where he proposed to place his Congo Museum.

Unfortunately, after considering the idea for many years, Leopold suddenly decided, eighteen months beforehand, to have it built for the 75th anniversary in 1905. He chose as architect for this work—which required more aplomb than M. Maquet, the serious Walloon, was master of—M. Charles Girault, who had already built the Petit Palais in the Champs Élysées at Paris. But in spite of the aplomb and dash which Girault put into it, the triple arch has a feeling of intellectual exhaustion about it. It appears to be an instance of the commonplaces of stylistic utterance which every artist can summon up without making any in-



PALAIS DES BEAUX-ARTS, BRUSSELS. A. BALAT, ARCHITECT

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View showing the old galleries of the Exhibition on either side

ARC DU CINQUANTENAIRE. CH. GIRAUT, ARCHITECT

road into his emotional nature. So we can imagine Beethoven, on being asked to improvise, striking a few characteristic chords and progressions, or Milton, to pacify an importunate political visitor, rolling out a passage of blank verse—and behind neither of these stylistic utterances might there be any of the real emotional significance which is behind the serious art of Beethoven and Milton. So in judging this arch we must consider it as a piece of improvisation. The main idea of three equal arches is fine, the detail is of usual French thoroughness, but there is no true articulation between the base of the quadriga and the arcade: and the end features, treated simply with coupled columns carrying a finial, taken from a votive altar, are void of true significance. The numerous groups of bronze attempt to hide up this exhaustion by means of fiorituri, but they merely emphasise it; they are too small and there are too many of them to add a solid enrichment to the arch, nor, with the exception of the quadriga, are they interesting enough to excite admiration for themselves individually. The general effect, however, has been greatly improved by the removal of the four corner figures which were endowed with a superfluity of restlessness, though the architectural treatment of the angle becomes meaningless in consequence. Various experiments have been tried

in the removal of these corner figures and those next to them, and the best arrangement appears to do without both, concentrating the figures round the central feature.

One cannot help regretting that this arch is not finer, for nothing could be finer than the situation; but the opportunity for something really great was lost through unfortunate hurry.

#### THE CONGO MUSEUM

The new Avenue de Tervueren carries on the axis of the Rue de la Loi on the farther side of the arch as far as a circus, where it is crossed by the new circumferential Boulevard Militaire: from this point the avenue curves to the left, the tram passing through a delightful corner of the Forêt de Soignes, to the old park of Tervueren. Here, facing a lake and set in magnificent trees, Leopold placed his Congo Museum, of which M. Girault was again the architect. It was completed in 1907, and is a much more successful piece of work than the arch. The building is one storey high, surrounding a courtyard; it is treated very simply with a Doric order. In the centre of the façade facing the park is the State entrance, leading into a circular vestibule panelled with great richness in marble and crowned by a dome. The galleries on the sides are doubled, and a charming effect is

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THE CONGO MUSEUM. CH. GIRAUT, ARCHITECT

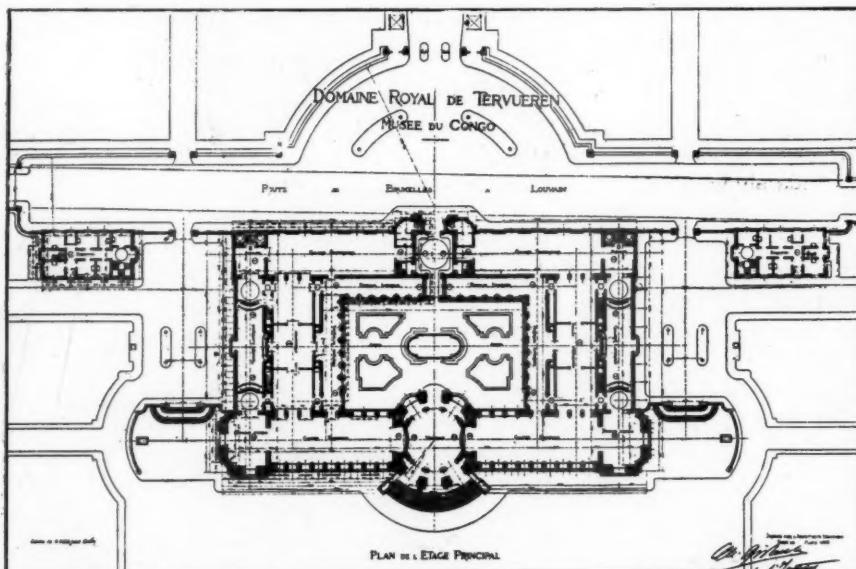
obtained by sinking the floor of the outer gallery by five or six steps; this greatly relieves the tedium which is often felt in walking round a large museum without a break in the floor level. The courtyard has a Doric portico running round three sides of it. The treatment of the surroundings, including the small houses for the director and staff, is an admirable example of French site-planning.

This building may not possess any superlative qualities of architectural design, but there is a certain sense of softness and mellowness about it that harmonises with the *douce accalmie* of the old park.

### LAEKEN AND KOEKELBERG

One of the great ambitions of Leopold's life was to inveigle Brussels society to live in the neighbourhood of his Royal Park and Palace of Laeken, on the north-west. He little relished the idea of a royal isolation, and, as a king of alien race, wished to surround himself with the houses and parks of the local nobility. But the general trend of the growth of fashionable Brussels is eastwards along the Avenue of Tervueren, and south-east in the neighbourhood of the Bois de la Cambre. It must be so—the whole of this side of Brussels

leans towards the glorious Forêt de Soignes, and it has the two magnificent direct city approaches of the Rue de la Loi and the Avenue de Louise, which, in addition, enter the town at the upper side, in the neighbourhood of the Parc, whence the best shops are reached immediately. Laeken is situated in somewhat the relation of Bethnal Green to London. In the eighteenth century the approach was fine enough by way of the



PLAN OF THE CONGO MUSEUM

## LEOPOLD II AND BRUSSELS

Allée Verte, bordered in Flemish fashion on one side by old houses and on the other by the old canal ; all this is now changed—the alley still has a few decrepit trees, the old houses still remain, but they are only waiting till their individual owners can be bought out and their sites sold for factories. The canal has become the new Port of Brussels, beyond

infancy, and when the new port is in working order they will swiftly spring into full life.

At Laeken a Japanese pagoda and at Koekelberg a Christian basilica were devised by the fertile brain of Leopold to draw people by hook or by crook to his end of the town and counteract its natural drawbacks. The pagoda was com-



THE CONGO MUSEUM : CIRCULAR VESTIBULE

it is the vast Gare des Marchandises, on the north is the huge gas and electricity works, and there is a mass of railway lines at the back of the Gare du Nord through which the king has to unravel his way from the Palais de Laeken to the Palais Royal of the Parc. The manufacturing and warehouse possibilities of this low-lying quarter are in their

pleted ; the basilica did not proceed beyond its foundation-stone ; both buildings he endowed with magnificent parks.

The public works at Laeken show us the late king in his worst vein ; in close and haphazard proximity are the Japanese pagoda, the Chinese restaurant, the monument of Leopold I, and a

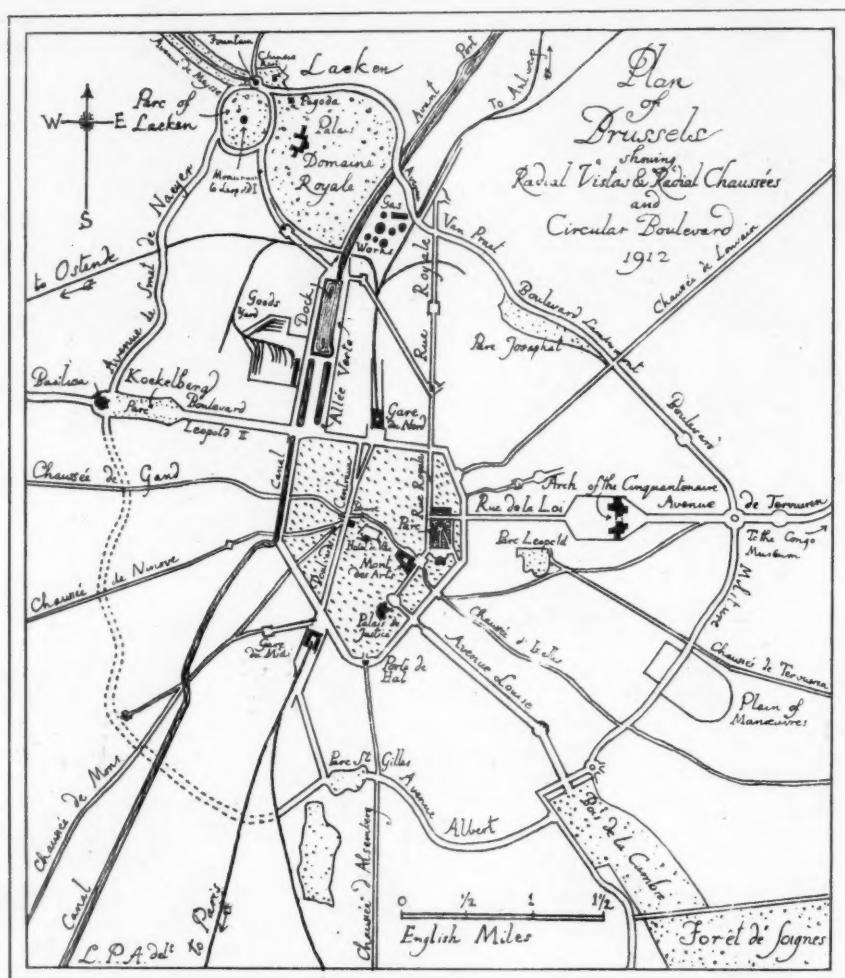
## LEOPOLD II AND BRUSSELS

fountain—a replica of that famous one of Giovanni of Bologna. The Royal Palace, hidden away among the trees of the Royal Park, has been reconstructed by M. Girault, and is fortunately cut off from this grotesque medley.

At Koekelberg, Leopold projected another great vista to the west, corresponding to the Avenue de Tervueren and Rue de la Loi on the east. Seen from in front of the Gare du Nord, the avenue of approach is superb; there is the dip along the old

Malines exist, there was no danger of its being the greatest.

Leopold II is reputed to have indulged in a considerable amount of land speculation in the neighbourhood of the Koekelberg, and up to the present it can have proved little profitable. In addition to the disadvantage already alluded to, of being at the wrong end of the town, there was a swing-bridge where the Boulevard Leopold II crossed the canal. The old basins and ware-



Boulevard d'Anvers towards the canal, and the rise beyond, along the new Boulevard Leopold II, to the park; the basilica at the far end of the park was to crown the hill. The design for this great church, conceived in emulation of the Sacré Cœur at Paris, was by M. Langerock, of Louvain; but to judge from the drawings it would have been a frozen lean giant with a large central spire surrounded by six smaller towers. This church was to have been the largest in Belgium, but so long as the cathedrals of Brussels, Tournai, and

houses have recently been done away with, new streets have been laid out on the site, and a permanent bridge has been substituted for the inconvenient swing-bridge. This improved entrance to the town has already had the effect of raising the value of the Koekelberg property; and though the fashionable advance eastwards will never be reflexed to the west, it is probable that a prosperous middle class may eventually build on the hill, which gives it a distinct advantage over low-lying Laeken.

## THE GREAT CIRCULAR BOULEVARD

It would be impossible to write about Leopold II's work at Brussels without a word on the Great Circular Boulevard which he projected and lived to see almost completed. When speaking of this town-planning of Leopold's, a comparison is naturally suggested with Napoleon III. It was, if anything, more of a personal affair with the former; he had no genius of a Haussmann to carry out his ideas, and no obedient single-mouthed capital ready to swallow what was administered to it. Instead, there was the small town of Brussels proper, surrounded by ten large populous communes, each pursuing its independent course of development and jealous of interference. This outer boulevard goes through eight distinct local authorities, and only at one point—at the Bois de la Cambre—does it touch the area of Brussels proper. Leaving the Bois in a northern direction, under the name of the Boulevard Militaire, it passes the Plaine des Manœuvres and intersects the Avenue of Tervueren; it then skirts the new park of Josaphat in Shaerbeek, the largest of the communes, and as the Avenue von Praet it crosses the canal and passes round the park of Laeken; from here a great avenue, nearly 500 ft. wide, marches in a north-westerly direction to the village of Meysse; but the Circular Boulevard turns due south to the park of Koekelberg. Here at present it stops, but it is to be continued through Anderlecht to meet the other branch from the Bois de la Cambre, which passes through the Parc de Saint-Gilles, not far from the Gare du Midi. Altogether some 20 kilometres have been constructed. It is certainly no exaggeration to say that this conjoint action—this treatment of the collection of communes as part of a Greater Brussels—is entirely due to Leopold's wideness of vision, and it is to be hoped that now he is dead there will be no return to parochial isolation.

In forthcoming issues of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW it is hoped to publish further articles on the architecture of Brussels; in particular the Palais de la Nation and the fine group of late eighteenth-century buildings around the Place Royale, the Place du Musée, and the Place des Martyrs will be dealt with, and there will be a special study of the Palais de Justice.

September 1912

## THE ART OF THE DELLA ROBBIA BY J. EDGCUMBE STALEY

(Concluded from p. 17, No. 188)

### II.



ANDREA, the eldest son of Luca Della Robbia's elder brother Marco, was born on October 28th, 1435. In childhood he displayed a genius like his uncle's, and at fifteen he entered Luca's studio as a pupil. He served a long apprenticeship, during which he learned his uncle's methods and not a few of his secrets, and entered thoroughly into the spirit of the new art. On the other hand, Andrea Della Robbia was by no means an ascetic like his uncle. He loved good men, good women, and good things, with an ardour only second to his love for sculpture.

Florence was, in the middle of the fifteenth century, at the zenith of her prosperity. Merchant and artisan, artist and model, rejoiced in the work of their hands. It was a world of perfect humanism, with an environment alluring and delectable. The children of the century had nothing but grand ideals of physical charm and intellectual attainment to live up to. The *Genti di Firenze* were famed the world over for personal beauty, nobility of bearing, graceful mental equipment, elegance of speech, and courtesy of



"THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN," SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE  
BY ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA

## THE ART OF THE DELLA ROBBIA

manner. These grand influences were ever in play, forming the character and training the intelligence of the rising generation. Andréa Della Robbia lived in this glorious period and revelled in all its fascinations. His works show how he grafted upon his uncle's simple and devotional manner the attributes of exuberant life and passion; the keynote of it all is human sympathy.

Very eloquently has he re-incarnated his ideal in the figure of the Holy Child, in complete harmony with the Madonna-cult of Luca. His own seven children were healthy, romping, loving models, ever ready at hand, with every childish mood and action. The *bambini* of the Spedale degl' Innocenti at Florence, done 1463-69, excite



STATUE OF ST. FRANCIS, CASENTINO  
BY ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA



"CHARITY," FROM THE FRIEZE ON THE  
OSPEDALE DEL CEppo, BY GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA

our liveliest interest. Each little nude figure has a character all his own; but, whilst the tender outstretched arms seem to invite a caress, every one is conscious of the pathos of his birth—a mere waif of a Florentine street. Still the baby faces which peep here and there and everywhere in Andrea's art seem to speak, and they say: "Look at me. I am Andrea's child!" Andrea's Madonna inclines her head to her Child, as though entirely absorbed in Him; this differentiates the supreme Madonna of Luca. (His earliest Madonna bears the date 1463.)

Andrea was no mere imitator of his uncle, although he advanced along the same road. He constantly struck out new lines and tackled fresh difficulties; perhaps he displays more of the artificer than the artist. A distinctive feature is the halo, which Luca used sparingly. This Andrea modelled in concave, and at first wholly white; but later he used colour and even gold. In his famous "Coronation of the Virgin" at Santa Croce in Florence, however, the exception proves the rule, but there St. Mary is the exponent of human sympathy. St. Francis of Assisi was Andrea Della Robbia's patron-saint, and nothing could have been more fitting than

## THE ART OF THE DELLA ROBBIA

that he should display his finest talents in his honour. Andrea's best things therefore are to be seen upon the Sasso della Verna, the memorable scene of the saint's reception of the *Stigmata* in 1224. "In the church," wrote Vasari, "and in other places on the bare rock of La Verna, Andrea executed many altar-pieces which are imperishable." His masterpiece is here—"The Crucifixion"—the altar-piece in the Chapel of the Stigmata. Christ's figure has a mellow ivory gloss, but it sets forth start-

become the ivory bronze of the ascetic. "Surely," one says, "this statue is chiselled out of *pietra serena*; it is not a mere bit of pottery." The whole work at La Verna was executed in Andrea's Florentine studio, and then carried piece by piece up the mountain fastnesses. The perfect manner of adaptation of statue or altar-piece to the existing parts of architecture is quite remarkable in Andrea's work generally; for example, the niche and bracket, with its ubiquitous cherub-head,



"THE CRUCIFIXION," IN THE CHAPEL OF THE STIGMATA, CASENTINO  
BY ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA

lingly the emaciation of suffering and the vital strength of victory. The saints, the angels, and the cherubs in the border are almost living realities. Andrea has managed his modelling and his colouring to perfection; he has evidently painted with tinted clay! The wreath of foliage and fruit is rich in polychrome.

Andrea's statue of St. Francis is the most appealing of all his detached compositions. We can trace the form of the saint beneath his habit; his expression is heavenly. Cream ivory has now

which enshrines St. Francis is exactly appropriate in every line and measurement. Andrea's glaze or enamel, prepared after his uncle's formulæ, bears witness to rich development; it surpasses in a way that of Luca, and resembles the rich polish observable upon fine old ivory. He had not to face Luca's difficulties in the treatment of human flesh. All the same it is not easy to fix the work of each accurately, and confusion reigns still in attributions.

The treatment of wreaths and garlands—such

## THE ART OF THE DELLA ROBBIA

distinctive features in the Della Robbia terra-cottas—is where we can predicate each master's work with certainty. Luca's are bolder and more natural, and generally pendulous, deep in colour, and the fruit unripe; Andrea's are artistically arranged in bunches; the foliage, flowers, and fruit are those of careful cultivation; oftener than not his garlands spring from painted pots and rise upwards. For colours he traversed the whole polychromatic gamut, and even added golden enrichments. Luca in his arabesques on pilasters and low reliefs clay-painted the lily of Florence for preference in every shape and size; Andrea's

tone, so that one wonders whether beyond the splendid enamelled group another open arch exists and one is gazing upon the face of nature! Optical illusion it is not, but a *tour de force* in architecture and sculpture-painting. One other point in the work of uncle and nephew is noticeable. Luca's draperies are severe in cut and fold, and are generally without patterned colour; Andrea's are more free in fall, and are usually elaborately embroidered in plastic colour and gold.

### III.

Andrea Della Robbia was a poor man; his



COAT-OF-ARMS ON THE CHURCH OF OR SAN MICHELE, FLORENCE  
BY ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA

floral queen was the honeysuckle, and it runs delightfully in riot through all his decorative schemes on plinth and pillar.

In the detail of background Luca stuck to his cobalt blue sky and sombre fir-tree. Andrea's blue is more illuminative; frequently he introduces wool-white cloudlets. The full effect of this cerulean treatment is noted in the convent chapel of the Osservanza at Siena, where Andrea's "Coronation of the Virgin" in terra-cotta crowns the major altar. The screen at the entrance reveals nothing but the blue sky beyond; the background of the altar-piece is precisely of the same

uncle's wealth had gone to his younger nephew Simone—the progenitor of the still existent family of Viviani-Della Robbia—and he had a numerous family. Three of his sons were monks, and four were sculptors; of the latter Giovanni alone remained under the parental roof, and wore most becomingly the family mantle of art. To his son and to his many pupils Andrea imparted his uncle's formulæ and added his own besides; but he lacked Luca's earnestness and devotion, and worked directly for money compensation and the upkeep of his home. Andrea Della Robbia died July 4th, 1525, and was buried in his uncle's



STATUE OF ST. LUCY AT SANTA MARIA-A-EMPOLI  
BY GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA

LAWRENCE  
of THE  
WARRIOR

## THE ART OF THE DELLA ROBBIA



DETAIL OF FRIEZE ON THE OSPEDALE DEL CEPO, PISTOIA, BY GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA

grave; and Andrea del Sarto painted his portrait in one of the frescoes of the Annunziata loggie.

Giovanni Della Robbia, alone of all his sculptor brothers, carried forward the terra-cotta cult acceptably; but, under his manipulation, notes of deterioration were plainly struck. Born in 1469, he was his father's third son, a child of beauteous form and of great promise. His earliest reliefs were "Nativities," with every variety of grouping, accessory, and detail—all more or less mannered with churchlike precision. This cult reached its highest phase in the "Nativity" of

the Via Nazionale, Florence, and the "Assumption" at Barga near Lucca. Here Luca and Andrea both yield place for elaboration and richness; nothing in the whole range of Della Robbia work is more gorgeous. The figures stand out in startling and vivid realism, and yet every part is beautifully modelled, painted, and enamelled, and the whole of each scene fits into its place harmoniously.

Giovanni excelled in plastic portraiture; his models or medallions of the busts of saints at the Certosa di Val d'Ema are admirable examples for all decorative architects and sculptors to follow.



ST. BONAVENTURE, FROM CERTOSA  
BY GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA



ST. THADDEUS, FROM CERTOSA,  
BY GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA

## THE ART OF THE DELLA ROBBIA

There were sixty-seven "Heads"—each a special study by itself. St. Thaddeus and St. Bonaventure are supreme expressions of age and character—the pert tones of youth and the rigid features of advanced years are to the life. Giovanni's terracotta statue of St. Lucy at Santa Maria-a-Empoli is a fit companion to his father's splendid St. Francis of Assisi. The baptismal font in the church of San Leonardo at Cerreto Guidi has an exceptional interest, not only on account of its date, 1511, but because it was a new departure in the adaptation of glazed terra-cotta. The whole construction is of burnt-clay mixture. The panels are reproductions of paintings by Verrocchio and Ghirlandajo, except "The Naming of St. John the Baptist," which was Giovanni's own invention—the three principal faces are portraits of his three young sons, Marco, Lucantonio, and Simone—all of whom, unhappily, died of the plague in Florence in 1527.

Everyone who desires to trace the development and, alas! the deterioration of the use of glazed coloured terra-cotta sculpture must go to Pistoja and there view the external frieze of the façade of the Ospedale del Ceppo. The whole scheme is a remarkable triumph of polychromatic architecture. The work occupied Giovanni Della Robbia off and on from 1497 to 1529. The subject, "The Seven Most Excellent Works of Mercy," is as suitable as can be conceived for its purpose. The working out of the idea gives us a precious record of personalities: dress, habits, and appointments of the period. Very noticeable in the panels is the lavish use of yellow—apparently Giovanni's favourite colour. The faces are doubtless portraits, the modelling of the nude is excellent, but the whole effect is rather hard; we miss Luca's wise restraint and Andrea's delicate blendings. The glaze, too, is rather lack-lustre, and the joints in the composition are, in places, loose and inexact. The statues which connect the panels are placed under well-designed canopies marking the "potter's" skill or a builder-architect's; they are "Faith," "Hope," "Charity," "Prudence," and "Justice"—each in happy juxtaposition with the flanking bas-reliefs.

Examples by Giovanni Della Robbia abound in Tuscany. He invariably signed and dated his work; failing which Luca and Andrea have left posterity puzzles in attribution. In a way he combines the asceticism of Luca and the alertness of Andrea. His figures are less easy than theirs, his accessories are somewhat heavier, and his decorative features are more artificial. The simple colours of Luca—his whites and blues, and the more generous range of Andrea's reds and golds—under Giovanni's hand gain consummate boldness: his arabesques assume emphatic prominence. His best points are good modelling, suitable positions for his figures, and sweetness of expression in their features.

Nobody has recorded Giovanni Della Robbia's death. His last dated work—that at Pistoja—is 1529; two years after he lost his sons; so perhaps that sorrow hastened his own end—it broke his heart. Girolamo and Luca, Giovanni's brothers, carried on the Della Robbia cult, but their hands never had the cunning of their predecessors. Benvenuto Cellini names them both, but refrains from criticising their work.

[N.B.—At the Victoria and Albert Museum may be seen many actual examples of the Della Robbia sculptures and many reproductions.]



FONT IN THE CHURCH OF S. LEONARDO, CERRETO GUIDI  
BY GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA

## INTERIOR DECORATION, 1660-1715

BY M. JOURDAIN

### INFLUENCES OF THE LATE STUART PERIOD



THE Restoration is no formal date, but begins a new chapter in English building. In England the Civil War had diverted men's energies from architecture and checked the development of Classic architecture of the school of Inigo Jones.

Jones. With the Restoration, however, and the rising tide of wealth that followed, begins a great building period, and the interest of amateurs like John Evelyn and the North brothers\* in architecture as a fine art, though the amateur was not really so influential as he became during the reigns of the Georges.

The half-century from the Restoration to the death of the last Stuart ruler in 1714 corresponds in date to that portion of the *grand siècle* in France covered by the activity of Louis XIV—which extended through the four reigns of our English monarchs. In France the personality of Louis and the accident of his long reign gave the period a unity which we do not get in England, where there was no attempt at a central artistic influence wielded by royalty.

It might have been expected that during the reign of Charles II, who "brought in a politer way of living,"† and whose relations with Louis XIV were so close, French influence in architecture and decoration should have predominated. As a matter of fact, the full French influence only appears with the reign of Louis XIV's opponent, William III. The foreign influences traceable in England are not, in the main, the result of royal prejudices or tastes, nor even political *ententes*, and they frequently coincided with actual rivalry or divergence of interests between ourselves and our model for the time.‡ Charles II was "without any great inclination to Holland, where he had been as barbarously used as it was possible for any gentleman to be," and William of Orange cannot be accused of French leanings; yet this did not affect the direction of art and architecture during their reigns.

During both periods England followed the country that led the way in civilisation and the arts. Holland had attained its greatest height of prosperity between 1640 and 1660 (at a time when the Civil War had given a check to building in England), and had secured almost the whole of the trade with the East. The field was left prac-

tically free to Holland by the troubles of the other States of Europe. Italy had been at the mercy of invading Spaniards, Germans, and Frenchmen. Spain and Portugal had dropped out of the race. France had passed from her own religious troubles to take part in the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) which had swept bare large portions of Germany. Holland became in England an object of admiring curiosity to the traveller, as we may judge by the early pages of Evelyn's Diary, and by the quantity of travel-books published during the latter years of the seventeenth century.

The standard of luxury among the Dutch middle-class was far higher than in England at the same date. The first half of the seventeenth century was to Holland what the later Elizabethan period was to England, an era of maritime enterprise and expansion, and commercial prosperity. "Whatsoever their estates be, their houses must be fair," writes Owen Feltham; and another traveller tells us that "their interior decorations are far more costly than ours, not only in hangings and ornaments, but in pictures, which are found even in the poorer houses." From the middle of the seventeenth century our merchants and statesmen were as intent on copying Dutch methods of finance as in directly competing with them in trade in all parts of the world.\* And the magnificence of the Town Hall of Amsterdam (begun 1648), the palaces of the Mauritshuis (begun 1635, finished 1664), and the House in the Wood (designed 1645) was not only familiarised by the travel-books, but was brought before the eyes of the many Royalist exiles who made their homes in the Low Countries while Cromwell ruled. With the failing of Holland's prosperity during the reign of Charles II there was a considerable immigration of highly-skilled artisans, of whom Grinling Gibbons is the most familiar and famous.

The particular type of Restoration architecture and interior decoration is associated with the great name of Wren. But Hampstead Marshall, designed by Wynne† in 1662, old Burlington House‡ by Sir John Denham, Clarendon House (begun in 1664) by Pratt, and Berkeley House (built in 1665) by Hugh May, were earlier than the period of Wren's activity, and are proof that the great architect was no innovator, but the exponent of a style already established in Holland. But towards the close of the century the influence of France superseded that of Holland. During the best years of the *grand siècle* the government of France was singularly efficient, its nation the most populous and powerful in Europe. The

\* See "Lives of the Norths," by Roger North. Roger North and his brother Dudley both spent considerable time in planning houses as a diversion.

† Evelyn, 1685, February 4th.

‡ Cf. English art during the "Empire" period in France.

\* "Social England," Vol. IV, p. 376.

† Said to have been born at Bergen-op-Zoom.

‡ Completed before the death of Sir John Denham in 1668.

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prestige of France, the personality of the King, imposed upon Europe and led its fashions. The reign of Louis XIV was a great pageant upon the stage of Europe, and every sovereign moulded his palace, his furniture, his etiquette, upon that of the Grand Monarque. French architects, decorators, and garden designers were in demand in all parts of Europe. Versailles had struck the imagination of the time. In the year 1687 "a person calling himself an engineer" exhibited a model of Versailles made of copper and gilt with silver and gold, and the gardens and waterworks, which was to be seen at Exeter 'change.

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 contributed to spread industries the French had so laboriously made their own; and in the case of the Huguenot, Daniel Marot, a designer of great merit of the school of Lepautre, was exiled from his own country and came, through his association with William, into relation with English decoration. He certainly styles himself "architect to the King of Great Britain," and his engraved designs published at Amsterdam in 1712\* crystallise the contemporary French-Dutch tendencies in design, and must have had their influence upon English interiors of the early eighteenth century. But before Louis XIV's policy with regard to the French Protestants nothing could have been more efficacious than the State intervention in the artistic industries which Colbert originated.

\* Ma'colm, "Manners and Customs of London."



The Architectural Review

Charles II had loved planting and building.\* He had taken a keen interest in Whitehall, and in the palace of Winchester which was not completed at the time of his death. His courtiers shared this taste, and it is not without reason that Evelyn calls the houses then building "palaces." London itself, which had been wrecked by the Great Fire, was largely rebuilt at this time, and Cosmo III of Tuscany on his visit to England writes how in 1669 "in a short time more than five thousand houses which were destroyed by the fire have been rebuilt in a more regular and symmetrical manner, approximating to the good style introduced into Italy, and quite different from the ancient mode of building in use in this country." "As if the fire had only purged the city," writes a later author,† "the buildings are infinitely more beautiful, more commodious, more solid (the three main virtues of all edifices), than before . . . whereas before they dwelt in low, dark, wooden houses, they now live in lofty, lightsome, uniform, and very stately buildings." The amount of new buildings is remarkable, for, in spite of the really considerable remains, much has perished. Indeed, most of the houses Evelyn singles out as specially notable have been demolished, such as Euston Hall, the Duke of Norfolk's new palace at Weybridge, and Clarendon House; or considerably altered, like Cassiobury.

The outburst of building continued as the growth of trade was fostered by the new coinage and the banking system, the speculations of William III's reign.‡ William III was a builder both here and in Holland, and keenly interested in decorative detail. Not content with the existing royal palaces, he was responsible for the Wren additions to Hampton Court, which he declared "for good proportion, state and convenience jointly were not paralleled by any palace in Europe."§ Convenience, however, seems to have been consulted more than state, and there is nothing in William's buildings that suggests the public life of Louis XIV, whose Versailles was the stage for the manœuvres of great crowds, for the unending pageant of the court. William, as we know, disliked publicity; and the character of his buildings rendered them a suitable model for the houses of his richer subjects.

\* Cf. Evelyn, February 4th, 1685. Again, October 27th, 1664, Charles II asked Evelyn to follow him alone to one of the windows "and asked me if I had any paper about me unwritten and a crayon. I presented him with both, and then laying it on the window stool, he with his own hands designed to me the plot of the future building of Whitehall, together with the rooms of state and other particulars."

† "Angliae Metropolis; or, The Present State of London, 1681."

‡ John Houghton, writing in 1683, says: "Whatever may be said against Stock-Jobbing, yet it has been the means to raise great sums of money."

§ Wren's "Parentalia."

Through the later years of Charles to the death of Anne, Wren was the leading influence,\* and, apart from his work in churches and public buildings, he had, no doubt from his position, an influence upon house design. There are several plans for large houses in his drawings in All Souls Library, but, as we have seen, the style of interior decoration known by his name was established before Wren's activity; and there is nothing that can be claimed as definitely English except the combination with wainscot of applied woodwork by Grinling Gibbons and his school; and the tact and sobriety of English taste which, like Holland, reduced to a simpler form the decoration of the French designers of the *grand siècle*. Except in the paintings of the Neapolitan Verrio, there is nothing of the barocco, which is the leading note of French decoration and decorative sculpture. During the reign of Anne, whose personal taste was not conspicuous, the French influence was continued; but there is a noticeable divergence in style between the greater and small houses at this time, the latter developing on English lines, the former bearing, besides the *goût du vaste* of Vanbrugh, the impress of the Italian decorators, painters, and stuccotore who appear to have found employment in this country in the early part of the eighteenth century. George I continued the tradition, though his efforts were confined to Herrenhausen rather than his less favoured palaces in England. But before the death of Louis XIV a reaction had set in; the English translation of the French style had lost its novelty, and France, in addition, no longer occupied her former dominant position in art and in European politics. It was again the turn of Italy; and it was to Venice, which represented the last energies of the Renaissance, the *virtuosi* of the early Georgian period turned for guidance both in decoration and architecture.

#### DECORATIVE PAINTING

Pictured walls and ceilings were of more historic and artistic interest in Italy than in England, where the full vogue extended for little more than half of the century after the Restoration. Though the school dates from the time when Charles II came to England as King, there are instances of decorative painters in the service of his father, for whom Gentileschi † worked at Greenwich, and Rubens at the Banqueting House‡ at Whitehall.

\* His career came to an end in 1718, when he was dismissed from the post of Surveyor-General which he had held for fifty years.

† Gentileschi . . . was invited over from France by King Charles, who gave him a considerable salary, and employed him in his palace, particularly at Greenwich, in painting ceilings.—Walpole, "Anecdotes of Painting."

‡ This ceiling was painted in nine compartments, which were fixed in their place between the end of 1635 and the middle of 1636. For this work Rubens was paid £3,000.



But the vogue barely extended beyond the royal palaces,\* and after the artistic interregnum of the Commonwealth, that exotic, decorative painting, was introduced and gained a more widespread influence. Verrio and Laguerre were followed by Thornhill—the best we can show of native talent. For Verrio and his followers the saloons and staircases and halls of the great houses built in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century afforded a wide scope. Rooms destined for the painter to try his skill upon were often finished without cornices, so that the whole surface became an immense uninterrupted canvas. It is rather unfortunate that such paintings have been exposed to somewhat obvious criticism by their position, and by the diffuseness of their allegory. "Painted ceilings" (writes Gilpin †) "at best are but awkward ornament; not only is it impossible to examine them without pain, but the foreshortening of the figures which is absolutely necessary to give them any effect is so contrary to what we see in common life that it is disgusting." It is easy to hit the mark in emphasising the unmeaning nature of the allegories, those "heathen gods, goddesses, Christian virtues and allegoric gentlefolks crowded into every room as if Mrs. Holman had been to heaven and invited everybody she saw."‡ The decorative paintings are simply an expression of

\* Gentileschi, however, worked for the Duke of Buckingham at York House.

† Gilpin, "Scot. Tour," Vol. I, p. 6.

‡ Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 1760.

## INTERIOR DECORATION, 1660-1715

the barocco in art, with its qualities and its defects, like barocco sculpture and architecture. They should be considered as what they are—as wall-coverings, fresh and bright in colouring, and seldom degenerating, except in the case of Verrio in his worst moments, into mere confusion and exuberance. The last word even on Verrio was not said by Pope.

The amount of mural painting must have been considerable; for, besides what still remains, much has perished, especially in London houses, such as the "palace" of Sir Robert Clayton in the Old Jewry, where the banqueting-room was adorned with battles of gods and giants in fresco; the staircase-hall of old Buckinghamshire House, where the walls were painted with the story of Dido, the roof "filled with figures of gods and goddesses."\*

Not only the great houses, but the taverns in London had their painted rooms; such as the "Mitre" in Fenchurch Street, where all the sides of a great room were adorned in panels as was then the fashion. In country houses the artist was often boarded and employed for some years. Even a comparatively poor man like the first Earl of Strathmore, when making provision for the decoration of Glamis Castle, employed a Dutch artist, Jacob de Wet, who had come to Scotland for the purpose of executing some of the ornamental work at Holyrood Palace, and who turned out portraits of one hundred and eleven Scottish kings at two pounds a head. The contract between the Earl and de Wet, dated January 18th, 1688,† well illustrates the position and the work of the minor decorative painters. De Wet was to have his bed and board at the castle whilst employed on the work. The Earl was to prepare the roof of the chapel and the dining-room and such panels of the side walls as were to be decorated with pictures, and was also to provide oil-colours, cloth, and canvas. The decorations in the chapel were taken from the engravings in the old Bible, still preserved at Glamis. The roof of the dining-room was to contain "the full historie of some one or other of Ovid's Metamorphoses." There was also to be a room decorated with the story of Icarus. Besides these paintings on a large scale, the artist was to do a series of doors and chimney-

\* "The walls are painted with the story of Dido. . . . The roof of the staircase, which is 55 ft. from the ground, is of 40 ft. by 36 ft., filled with figures of gods and goddesses. . . . The bas relief and little squares above are all episodical paintings of the same story, and the largeness of the whole has admitted of a sure remedy against any decay of colours from saltpetre in the wall, by making another of oak laths." Description by the Duke of Buckingham, printed in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1814.

† "The Glamis Book of Record," a diary written by Patrick, first Earl of Strathmore, and other documents relating to Glamis Castle, 1684-1689, ed. A. H. Millar.

pieces for the castle, all of which were "to be representationes of figures and poetical fictions or such oyr things as are usuall and proper." Verrio was also domesticated at Burleigh and Chatsworth, but his prices were considerably in advance of the humbler de Wet.

Decorative painting was a foreign method, and needed foreign executants. Verrio, whose performances were held in such high esteem by Evelyn and his contemporaries, was the first to occupy the field. His arrival in England must have been before 1671, when Evelyn sees his first work in England, the frescoes in the Hall at Euston.\* His employment at Windsor brought him a small fortune under Charles II, but the Revolution being "by no means agreeable to Verrio's religion or principles" he quitted his place and worked at Burleigh† and Chatsworth.‡ But through Lord Exeter's intervention he agreed to serve William III at Hampton Court, where he probably began to work in 1699. He died in 1707. His assistant, the Flemish Lanscroon,§ who had helped him at Windsor, is responsible for the signed and dated staircase at Drayton, and the extensive decoration of Powis Castle (during the occupation of the Earl of Rochford), where the ornamentation of the staircase is "complimentary to Queen Anne."

But the prevailing influence, after Verrio, is French, and the *mauvais bon goût* of the Frenchman Laguerre is certainly an advance upon the neo-Italian vulgarity of the Neapolitan painter. Theatrical as is the saloon at Blenheim by Laguerre, it is more architectural in treatment than anything of Verrio's. Laguerre, whom Verrio employed, carried on the style with the difference to be expected by their nationalities; for Laguerre, the godson of Louis XIV, had studied under Le Brun. He has the fine scenic quality of French decoration and displays more scholarship than the exuberant Verrio.|| He executed a great number of ceilings, staircases, and halls between 1683, the date of his arrival in England,

\* "In my Lord's house, in the great hall and some of the chambers and rooms of State, are paintings in fresco by Signor Verrio, being the first work he did in England." Evelyn's Diary, 16 Oct. 1671.

† Burleigh is remarkable for having, besides a very large number of Verrio's decorations, a later essay in the same manner by Thomas Stothard, on the walls of the grand staircase, painted between 1780 and 1783.

‡ Also at Lowther Hall (burnt).

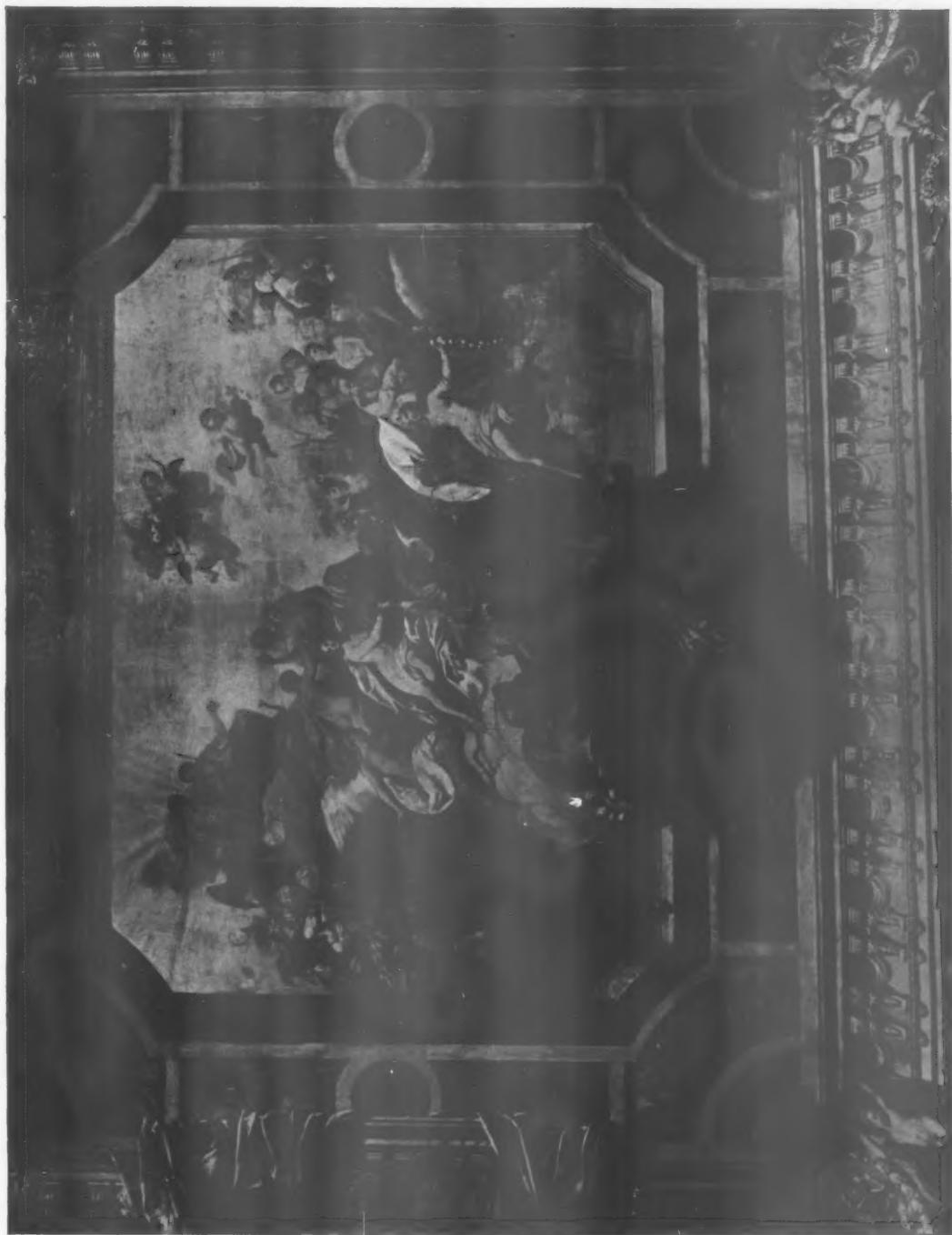
§ He died in 1737.

|| "At first he was placed in the Jesuits' college. . . . He brought away learning enough to assist him afterwards in his allegorical and historic works. . . . Vertue thinks that Sir James Thornhill was indebted to him for his knowledge of historic painting on ceilings."—Walpole, "Anecdotes of Painting."



CEILING OF THE GREAT STAIRCASE, STOKE EDITH  
BY THORNHILL

LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY



CEILING OF THE HALL, STOKE EDITH  
BY THORNHILL

LAWRENCE  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY

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and his death in 1721. Two Frenchmen,\* Jacques Rousseau and Charles de la Fosse, came to England at the invitation of Ralph, Duke of Montagu, and decorated Montagu House in Bloomsbury, and probably Boughton, the Duke's country seat in Northamptonshire, remarkable for being built in the French style. Even English artists like Isaac Fuller learnt their art in France. But the English exponents of decorative painting are only remembered by the curious—from their nationality, or from the contrast with the present reputation and the esteem in which

than those of Rubens at Whitehall."\*\* As a matter of fact the leading characteristic of the Sheldonian ceiling is lack of decorative value.

Both for the quantity and quality of his work, a later artist, Thornhill, makes a more considerable figure among English decorative painters. He carried on the French tradition, for he was trained in France, and had formed himself on Le Brun when he visited that country as a young man. His activity extended beyond the reign of George I, and he was the last to treat whole



FROM THORNHILL'S SKETCH-BOOK

they were held by their contemporaries, who thought that future ages were to owe more to Robert Streeter† than Michelangelo (in Whitehall's silly panegyric); and Streeter's paintings for the New Theatre at Oxford "better done

rooms as canvases. He stands between the two periods, for we find him at work with Laguerre at Chatsworth and Blenheim. Greenwich Hospital occupied him, at different intervals, a space of nineteen years (1708-1727). His ceiling in the Queen's State Bedchamber at Hampton Court was painted in 1715, and pronounced by Wren and

\* Louis Cheron, 1660-1713, came to England in 1695, and was employed at Boughton, Burleigh, and at Chatsworth. Berchett (1659-1760), born in France, came to England in 1681, but then stayed only a year. He came again "and painted for some persons of rank in the West." "He came a third time to England, where he had sufficient business. He painted the ceiling in the chapel of Trinity College, Oxford, and the staircase at the Duke of Schomberg's in Pall Mall."—Walpole, "Anecdotes of Painting."

† 1624-80. He was appointed Sergeant-painter at the Restoration. The Sheldonian ceiling was painted in 1669.

\* Pepys, however, had the taste to dissent. In 1669 he writes: "Went to Mr. Streeter, the famous history-painter, where I found Dr. Wren and other *virtuosos* looking upon the paintings he is making for the New Theatre at Oxford; and, indeed, they look as if they would be very fine, and the rest think better done than those of Rubens, at Whitehall—but I do not fully think so."

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others "skilfully and laboriously performed"\*\* and superior to the work of Verrio. He is well represented at Moor Park and Stoke Edith.<sup>†</sup> The ceilings of the hall and staircase at Stoke Edith are here illustrated. The former shows an assembly of the gods with Neptune breaking the architectural framework; the latter, Apollo and Artemis shooting their arrows upon the children

\* 15 Oct. 1715. Sir Christopher Wren, Sir John Vanbrugh, and Sir Charles Dartequenave, the officers of His Majesty's

of Niobe, whose death is shown on the staircase wall below. Thornhill exhibited no lack of invention, and his sketch-book in the British Museum shows him to have been a capable artist who kept a kind of index or register of suitable allegorical and mythological subjects for the decoration of any great house he might be called upon at any time to undertake. With Thornhill ends the school of decorative painters trained in France; for during the latter portion of



FROM THORNHILL'S SKETCH-BOOK

Works, report to the Lords of the Treasury they were of opinion "£457 10s. might be allowed him including all gilding, decoration and history-painting, being at the rate of £3 11s. per square yard, which price is inferior to what was always allowed Seignior Vario for works in our opinion not so well executed." Quoted in Law's "Hampton Court," Vol. III, p. 206.

<sup>†</sup> "Moor Park was designed by Giacomo Leoni, and built for Mr. Styles, the richest of the South Sea Adventurers. Sir J. Thornhill was the surveyor. He painted the saloon and hall: the ceiling of the first-mentioned is an exact copy of Guido's Aurora in the Rospigliosi Palace at Rome. In the hall are four large compartments which exhibit the story of Jupiter and Io." —Walpole, "Anecdotes of Painting."

the reign of Queen Anne and George I "those who could describe history or allegory upon an extensive surface" were immigrant Italian artists,\* the last exponents of the decorative painting which had a prolonged Indian summer in Venice.

(To be continued.)

\* Antonio Belucci (1654-1726), a Venetian who arrived in England in 1716, and was employed on the chapel at Canons. Antonio Pellegrini (1675-1751), a Venetian, was brought from Venice by the Duke of Manchester. He painted Castle Howard, and the staircase, boudoir, and chapel at Kimbolton. Marco Ricci (1679-1729).

## SANATORIA FOR THE COMMUNITY SUGGESTED DISCUSSION



At the present time there are two questions which imperatively call for the serious attention of all those citizens who have the best interests of the community at heart. The one is that of sanatoria, the other is that relating to the housing of the labouring classes. The health, well-being, and happiness of millions are involved in the satisfactory solution of these questions, and they must be approached in a spirit where party finds no place. The best results can only be secured if this proposition is accepted; and towards achieving the desired end two important sections of the community, working hand in hand—medical men and architects—can effect an immense amount of good in moulding public opinion.

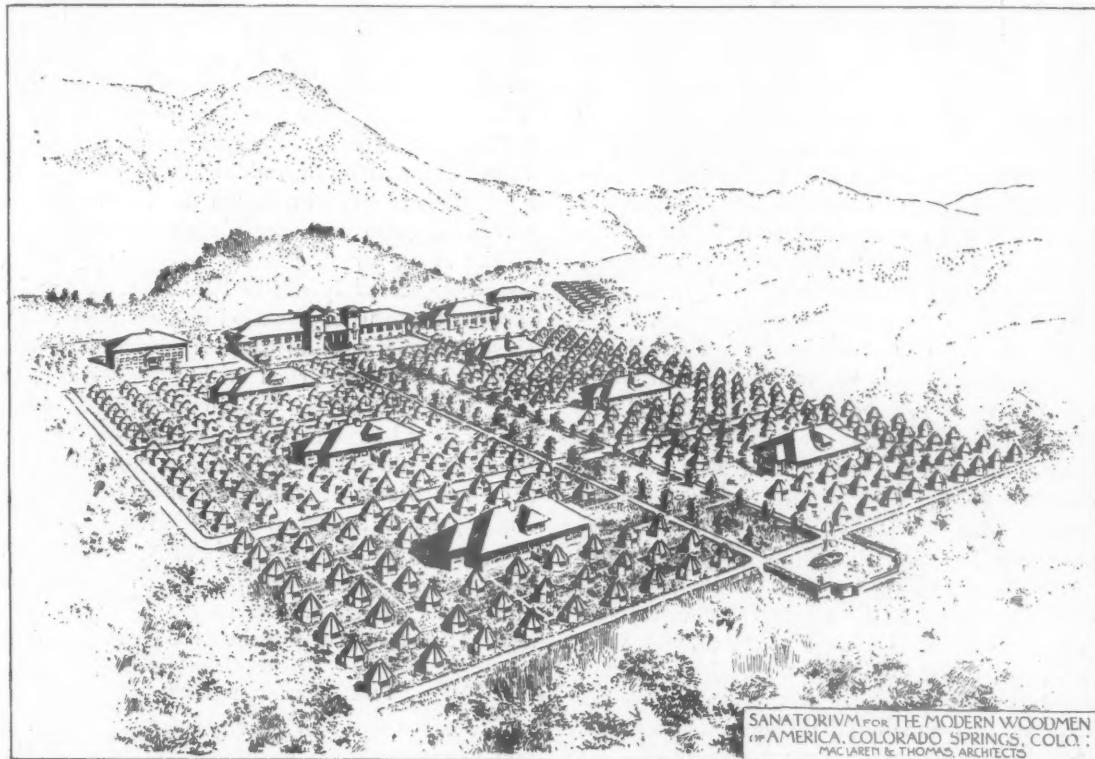
First and foremost, idiosyncrasies and the anticipation of personal aggrandisement must be laid aside.

It is quite conceivable that medical science will condemn permanent buildings for the treatment of tuberculosis, and insist on the sites being changed from time to time, in order to prevent the area becoming impregnated with disease germs. But there is nothing in this condition which precludes the design from being artistic and satisfactory from an architectural point of view.

It is a fetish with many architects that no real architecture is possible unless it is built of brick or stone—i.e., unless built permanently—and that to build with wood or lath-and-plaster walls is merely to play with the subject. Doctors, too, are inclined to sneer at a temporary building as being cheap or nasty, and as though it were an insult to them professionally to be asked to take charge of a range of wooden houses.

A review of present-day knowledge of sanatoria should be of the greatest service, and the Editor of *THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW* therefore proposes to ask well-known architects and medical men to say what they consider to be needed. Correspondence is invited from any readers who have had practical experience of sanatoria.

At the outset it will be necessary to overcome the prejudices of the classes who will make use of the sanatoria when established—the acceptance of sanatoria benefits being purely voluntary on their part. So far as one can judge, the plan will not be to provide for the permanent housing of patients, but rather to create training centres in which the present deplorable ignorance with regard to the diseases to be treated shall, by practical experience, be dissipated, and the beneficial results achieved by complying with certain hygienic rules and regulations be brought home to the masses. When they have learned their lesson it will be possible to allow them to go to



their homes and there follow out the treatment they have recognised to be beneficial.

It is of the greatest importance to make the buildings, whether temporary or permanent, attractive to the popular eye, and to remove as far as possible any suggestion of the "house." The poor, as is well known, are hyper-sensitive in these matters, and if they are to be attracted into these hospitals everything must be avoided that might cause them to be classed with work-houses and other eleemosynary institutions. This, however, should not be difficult if, in working, they approximate to a hospital (which is used by many classes indifferently) and several kinds of wards are provided.

These are the views of the Editor. The matter may present an entirely different aspect to others, and for this reason he cordially invites co-operation and discussion by all interested.

One thing is quite certain: the provision of sanatoria is an experiment which has to be carried out partly at the cost of the ratepayer, and it may

prove a very heavy burden; therefore, on this lowest ground, it is of great importance to all of us to interest ourselves in the matter. The best advice must be obtained, and no eminent architect, whether local or otherwise, should be allowed to burden the rates unnecessarily with the upkeep of a building the expense of which exceeds the necessity of the case. It behoves all good citizens, therefore, to bestir themselves, whether they are actuated by the noble motives of saving life and suffering, or merely of saving their own pockets, in order to make this momentous undertaking a success. A success it can be if we attack the problem with sympathy: failure it may be if we are influenced by a carping, distrustful spirit.

The Editor hopes to get a response from the readers of this journal which will show that when the life and happiness of the struggling masses of this country are concerned there is but one voice and aim, i.e. to come to their succour with heart and mind and soul.

## THE NEW FEDERAL CAPITAL OF AUSTRALIA



ONSIDERABLE interest among architects and others concerned with town planning has been evinced by the world-wide competition instituted by the Australian Government for the design of the new capital city at

Canberra. An unfortunate dispute arose with respect to the conditions, which were considered so unsatisfactory that many architectural bodies declined to have anything to do with the competition. When the conditions were published the Australian Institutes of Architects promptly protested against them, the principal objection being that there was no proper provision for the appointment of qualified assessors. These Institutes, being affiliated to the Royal Institute of British Architects, appealed to that body for support, which was accorded, with the consequence that the members of these organisations refrained from competing. Every effort was made to get the conditions altered, but the Australian Government remained obdurate, contending that there was no substantial grievance, as the assessors were eminently qualified for their task. The assessors were:—Mr. J. M. Coane (chairman), "a well-known consulting engineer and surveyor in Melbourne"; Mr. J. H. Smith, president of the Victorian Institute of Civil Engineers; and Mr. John Kirkpatrick, "a Sydney architect of great

ability, who was a member of the Committee appointed by a preceding Government to report upon the suggested site for the capital." The secretary was Mr. C. J. Clarke, a Tasmanian architect. In reply to a published communication on the subject from the secretary of the R.I.B.A., Sir G. H. Reid, High Commissioner for the Commonwealth of Australia, concluded with this somewhat curious pronouncement: "The nature of the competition must be kept in view. It is not for a building, or series of buildings. It is to submit a design for a new city and surroundings on a vacant piece of country, with all the town, street, garden, and park planning such a project involves." Did Sir G. H. Reid really suppose that this explanation was necessary, and, if so, did he imagine that an architect is one who is solely concerned with the designing of buildings? However, the competition is over, and to go at length into such matters would now be futile. The awards were as follows:—1st (£1,750), Walter B. Griffin, of Chicago, U.S.A.; 2nd (£750), E. Saarinen, of Helsingfors, Finland; and 3rd (£500), A. Agache, of Paris. Mr. Griffin, the successful competitor, is a Chicago architect and landscape artist, and he is only 35 years of age. His design is illustrated on the opposite page.

### THE ACCEPTED DESIGN

The prime object of the city is for governmental and not commercial purposes, and involves the

## THE NEW FEDERAL CAPITAL OF AUSTRALIA

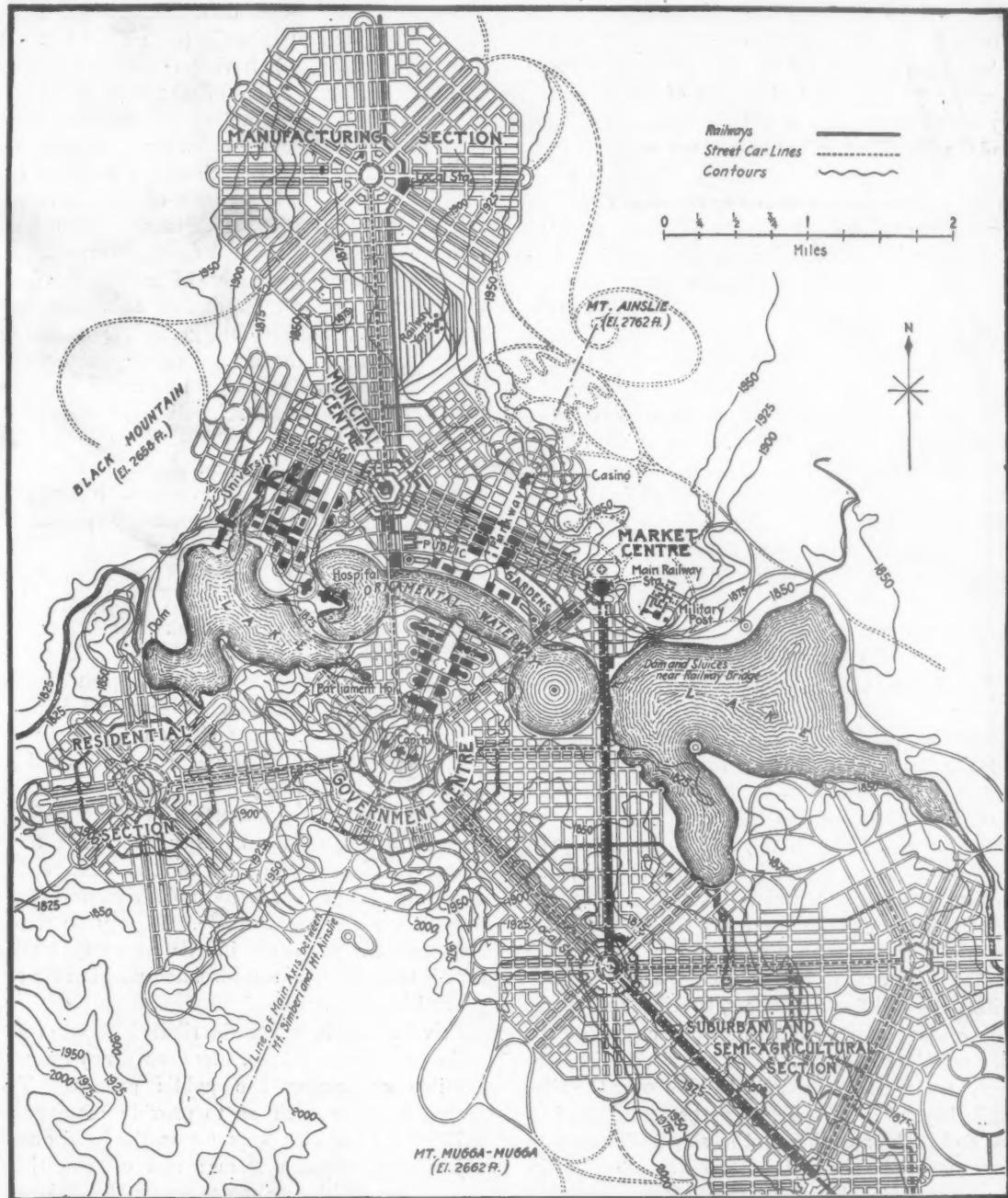
accommodation of deliberative and educative activities which demand an air of quiet and retirement. The arrangement and treatment of the public buildings, therefore, are governed by architectural rather than traffic considerations.

The River Molonglo traverses the site, and is utilised for developing an extensive water centre.

The chief feature of the design is that the Government buildings are grouped on the south side of the river, which at this point is treated as an ornamental waterway, not only forming an

attractive feature in itself, but serving to separate the Government section from the city proper and to isolate it from the commercial centres and activities. This arrangement adds to the dignity and individuality of the aspect of the city as a whole.

The next feature is the selection of several points for specific centres (civic, market, railway, manufacturing, residential, etc.). These points are developed as open spaces connected by broad avenues, while other avenues radiate from each



ACCEPTED DESIGN, BY WALTER B. GRIFFIN

## THE NEW FEDERAL CAPITAL OF AUSTRALIA

centre; the radial or longitudinal streets being connected by a system of cross or ring streets on a polygonal design.

The grouping of all public buildings is made with reference to two main axes. One is a land axis, between the summits of Mount Ainslie and Mount Bimberi, a distance of thirty miles; upon this the Federal or Governmental buildings are placed. The other extends across from the river to Black Mountain, and will be made a distinctive water axis by the development of the proposed waterway. These axes (and consequently all the Government buildings) are at a slight angle from the north-south and east-west lines, to secure advantages of light and shade. With streets conforming to the cardinal points of the compass, 25 per cent. of them would be without sunlight, and on the diagonal streets there would be no shade during part of the day. These two co-ordinate axes are not primarily thoroughfares, but form the garden frontages for all the important Federal buildings. Under a single source of control, unhampered by utilitarian considerations, they can be developed systematically and consistently, as in the case of the Mall at Washington.

The Government buildings are grouped in a quiet area apart from the city and away from the business thoroughfares, but sufficiently easy of access. The Capitol is the centre of one of the polygonal street plans, and is the focus of nine avenues, but many of these lead only to the rocky hillsides of the highest residential areas, and none of them approach nearer to the actual centre than the limits of a hilly park. Two of the avenues, however, are thoroughfares to the two distinctive centres of the city, and both of these are provided with street railways.

The Federal Governmental buildings are in three groups, namely: (1) the Capitol, flanked by the Governor's residence and the Premier's residence; (2) the Parliament House, or Houses; (3) the departmental buildings. The first is on an elevation about 160 ft. above the river level, and the second is on an elevation 70 ft. lower, but 40 ft. above the lower terrace of the third group, which is next to the water basin, this group occupying the slope down to the water front. All the buildings look down upon the waterway and public gardens, beyond which a broad parkway, lined with trees and fine residences, continues along the line of the axis, terminating at a casino on the slope of the mountain. This terminal point is at such an elevation as to afford a view over the city, while beyond are developed paths and roads in a wooded park extending up the slope. The width of this parkway would be 600 ft., and the distance between the Parliament House and the casino would be about two miles. At the water

front the parkway ends in public gardens facing the governmental centre across the river.

The city proper forms a unit in itself, independent of but in close relation to the Federal unit. The main municipal group ranks next in importance to the Federal group, and for this (unlike the latter) accessibility is a prime consideration. The municipal section is grouped upon two centres, which are points on main axial thoroughfares radiating from the Government centre and crossing the formal waterway by bridges at the narrower channels connecting the central and end basins. These three centres and their connecting avenues form an equilateral triangle (with sides approximately 1½ miles long), having the Federal group within the apex. Each of the two municipal centres is designed as a large open space, capable of park treatment and surrounded by buildings of suitable style and character between the radiating streets. The centres of this municipal section are at a sufficient distance apart to prevent congestion and to allow for future expansions, while maintaining the feature of ready access from the railway, the Capitol, the minor centres, and the residential areas. The first group (or municipal centre) comprises the central railway station and the markets, around which will naturally assemble wholesale and retail merchandising, and possibly light manufactures.

Midway between these centres, and at the intersection of their connecting avenue with the parkway already described, is a secondary centre which may be classed as the recreation centre. Here are grouped the art galleries, museums, opera house and theatre; and adjacent to these are the public gardens on the north bank of the waterway.

North of the city, in the outlying district flanking Mount Ainslie, is a manufacturing and industrial district, while to the south-east, and flanking Mount Mugga-Mugga, provision is made for the developing of an agricultural suburb or village district.

Two subsidiary but important provisions of the general plan are the university and the military post. The former is placed on the western side of the city, and the latter occupies a commanding position on the eastern side. It may be noted also that the peninsula in the western circular lake is utilised as a semi-isolated position for the general hospital.

Private buildings are distributed between the main architectural axes, along as many lines as possible connecting the public groups. The arrangement is such as to provide rectangular building sites or blocks as far as the junctions of adjacent polygonal systems; and even at these points sites with acute angles are avoided, triangular buildings being both expensive and ugly.

# THE HÔTEL BIRON, PARIS

BY JASPER KEMMIS, B.A.



O the intelligent traveller who knows his Paris, the news of the acquisition of the Hôtel Biron by the French Government for the sum of £320,000 (8,000,000 francs) will come as a pleasure and a relief.

He will remember the long-drawn-out controversy over its sale, and the real anxiety of art-loving Paris as to its ultimate destiny.

To what purpose it will eventually be devoted is not yet settled. It may become a new headquarters for the Ministry of Justice, a public institute, or, more probable still, a musée of the period of its greatest fame—just prior to the outbreak of the Revolution of 1792.

Outside of Paris the Hôtel Biron had been little known until quite recently, yet it is one of the most interesting of the historic monuments of the capital, famed alike for its architectural beauty and its historic records.

The building is situated at the angle of the Rue de Varenne (the final "s" has long disappeared) and the Boulevard des Invalides, the dome of the latter being visible through the trees in the garden behind the house. It lies, therefore, in the very heart of the once famous Faubourg Saint-Germain, almost facing the Pont Alexandre III.

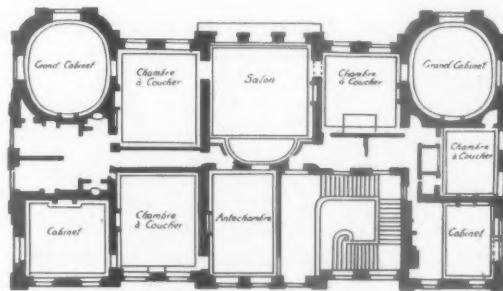
As seen to-day, the mansion and its immense gardens—once the pride and wonder of all Paris—are in a state of chaos and neglect, the tenants since the expulsion of the nuns under the Associations Law in 1904 having all been recently ejected, with the solitary exception of M. Rodin, who has been permitted for the time being to retain his two magnificent studios on the first floor.

The estate in all covers about 12½ acres, and comprises four buildings in addition to the gardens. Three of these buildings may be dismissed in a few sentences. One is a large and most unsightly chapel, next to the entrance on the right, which at once spoils the beauty and symmetry of the forecourt. Its presence there is due to the wholesale vandalism committed by the Dames of the Sacré Cœur and their priests, who seem to have made a point of destroying as much as they could of the beauty and architectural charm of the place during the long period of their residence there. Then there is a smaller chapel erected in 1823, now practically in ruins; and at the bottom of the garden is the large private residence of the Lady Superior, erected by the first Mother, Mme. Madeleine Sophie Barat, in 1858,

which in its turn spoils the appearance of that end of the garden.

Happily, however, the splendid main building of Gabriel père, Royal Architect to Louis XV, is still intact in its main outlines. It was built for M. Perrin de Moras in 1728–30. The work was carried out under the superintendence of M. Léon Aubert, and belongs to what Professor Blomfield calls "the French Néo-Classical" style of architecture. Hideous red-brick chimneys, alas! defile its roof to-day; but these, I am given to understand, will be removed, as well as such other anachronisms as the *vacherie* in the garden.

Like most of the noble houses of its period, the main building is approached by a spacious forecourt, or *cour d'honneur*, leading direct from the entrance to a flight of steps in the central pavilion of the house. This forecourt has since been divided by a transverse wall with entrance gateway, through which you get but a partial view of the fine façade. To the right and left of the entrance there were originally a number of inner, or *basse*, courts; those on the right provided stables for thirty-three horses and eight coach-houses and led to the great kitchens of the establishment. These were purposely separated from the main building so as not to offend the olfactory nerves of the aristocrats who were frequent guests at the mansion. They were, however, connected with the basement by a series of passages, which in turn led by a special staircase to the grand *salle-à-manger* and other parts of the ground floor. The *basse-courts* on the other side of the entrance were added by the Duchess of Maine, and provided accommodation for the officers of her household. Her grace, who was the widow of Armand Louis, Duc du Maine, one of the Bourbon princes, leased the house for life from the widow of de Moras—1737 to 1752. The Duchess also made various other alterations inside the house (to be referred to later), but did not destroy the beautiful proportions of the grand salons. On this same side also the old grille leading to the gardens still remains, the sleeping



HÔTEL BIRON: FIRST-FLOOR PLAN

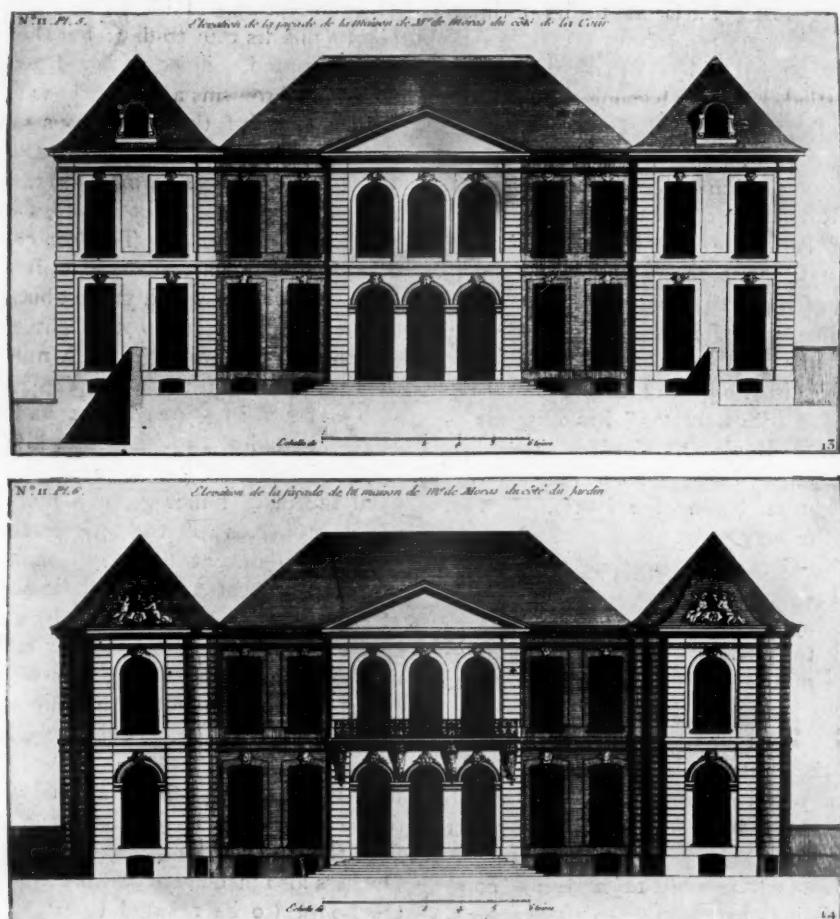
## THE HÔTEL BIRON, PARIS

apartments of the officers mentioned having become part of the Hôtel Vendôme, next to the Biron, but now fallen into desuetude.

According to the plans given in Blondel's "L'Histoire de l'Architecture Française" (1752-6) the basse-courts on the right were entered by a gate supported on either side by fluted columns. These columns still exist, but the stables are removed, while the kitchens and general disposition of the basement have been altered out

somewhat pretentious, not to say pompous, style. Around the house on three sides was a terrace which was designed to serve as a lounge in front of the rooms on the garden side, while on the rear side it leads down to a lawn, and so to the great garden.

Both the front and rear façades consist of three projecting (*avant-corps*) pavilions, those at the rear being much more ambitious in sculptural ornamentation and design than in front, this



(From Blondel)

of all recognition since the house became a convent.

We learn from Blondel that the first owner, de Moras, was the son of a barber from Languedoc who had become a millionaire at the early age of twenty-six by successfully following the speculations of John Law, of Lauriston, for a time Controller-General of Finance in France. Like many another of his kind, de Moras desired to build himself *la plus superbe maison qu'il y ait dans Paris*, and from all accounts he seems to have succeeded. The exterior of the mansion is severe, devoid of embellishment, and the interior was decorated in a

having been evidently the show side of the house. Both on the garden and on the court side two wings flank the central pavilion, but the end pavilions on the garden side differ from those in front by having only single windows on each floor —there are but two floors, as was customary with large mansions of this period. Blondel calls attention to the difference, explaining that the rounded piers were inserted on this side to give a more pleasing effect from within; but he considered that it detracted from the exterior appearance of the house. The arcades on the first floor are not treated with more success, nor is the grand

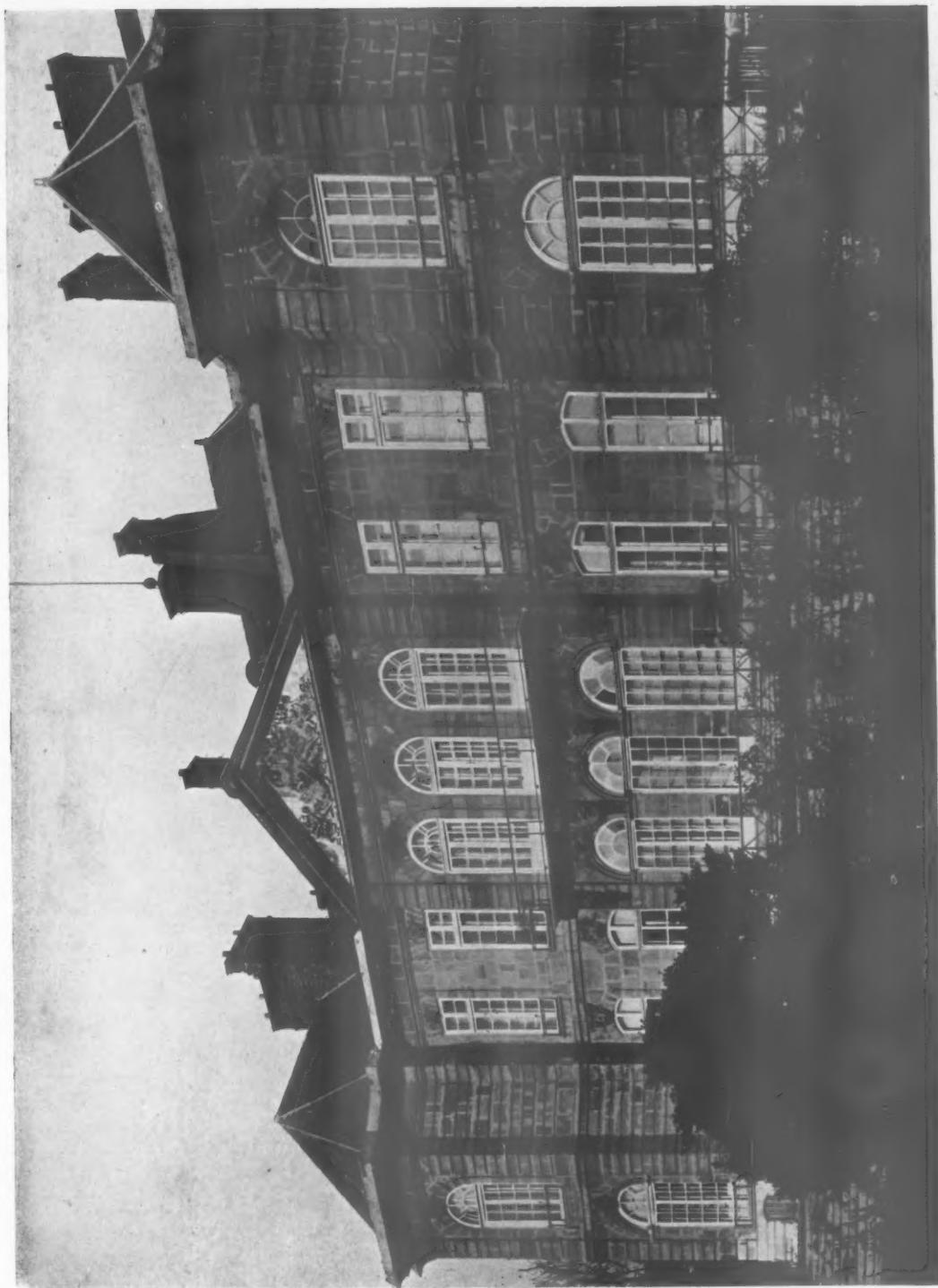
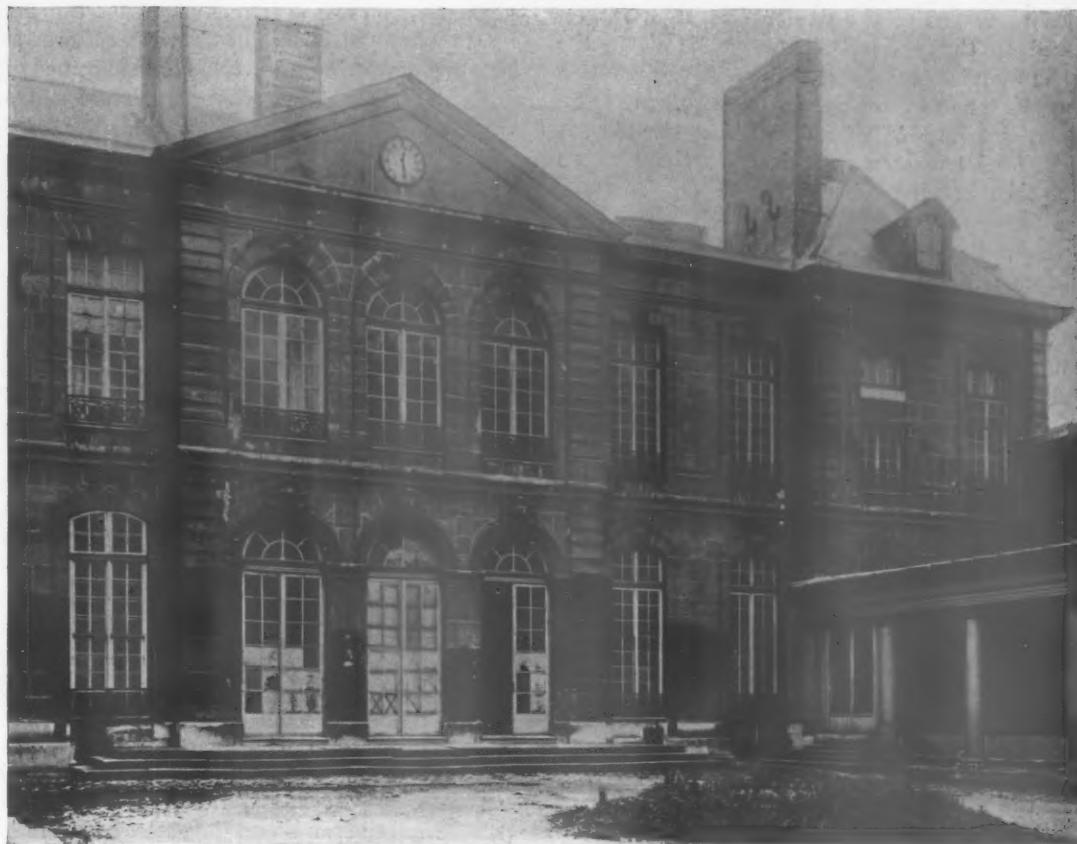


Photo : A. Giraudon

HÔTEL BIRON, PARIS : GARDEN FRONT



## THE HÔTEL BIRON, PARIS



DETAIL OF ENTRANCE FRONT

Photo : A. Giraudor

balcony in front of the central *avant-corps* to be commended. It would have been more in keeping with the whole had the architect contrived a projection suitable to the exterior balconies.

On entering the house the first feeling is one of disappointment at the apparent smallness of the grand vestibule, of which the chroniclers make so much. But this is due to the alterations that have taken place. Instead of the fine space which formerly led right through the great salon into the garden, the hall was closed up on the court side by the Duchess of Maine, because the open arcades made it too cold for use in winter; further, she had a door placed between it and the salon, thus turning the vestibule into a waiting-room for liveried servants and others conveying messages from distinguished personages. And at a later date the nuns blocked up the hall with great wooden columns covered with plaster.

To the visitor in search of fine architecture, however, the large rooms of the first and ground floors are the real *but*. Here Gabriel produced his finest work. For information as to the original embellishments of the rooms we have to turn again to Blondel, who, after recording his approval of the noble proportions of the two floors, goes on to speak of the ornamentation, the

exquisite mural carvings and superb mirrors, all of which have been removed by the convent authorities. These, says Blondel, combine to make the Hôtel Biron "one of the most perfect specimens of French classical architecture of our day." He is equally warm in his appreciation of the taste and judgment displayed by Gabriel in laying out the immense garden, with its parterres, shady nooks, etc.

The two main floors of the mansion each comprise eleven spacious chambers, the most important of those on the ground floor being the two grand cabinets, ballroom, the historic dining-room, and the state bedchambers. The dining-room was to the left of the entrance hall. It was originally used by de Moras (who lived but a year to enjoy the fruits of his great wealth) as an entertainment salon, but was turned by the Duchess of Maine into a second ante-room, this alteration being one of the many made during the twelve years she occupied the house, which was known in her day as the "Hôtel du Maine."

Ascending by the grand staircase we find the rooms on the *première* to be in keeping with those on the *rez-de-chaussée*, the four principal apartments being of princely proportions, and admirably adapted for decoration.

With regard to the gardens, which it is proposed to throw open to the public when the restoration is complete (they are at present in a shocking state of neglect and decay), it may be noted that as originally designed a magnificent stretch of lawn ran right back to the Rue de Babylone parallel with the Rue de Varenne. Smaller gardens and cunningly-designed beds were worked along the side parallel with the kitchen garden; the central portion is occupied by a fine broad walk, and the paths on either side were ornamented with trees along the borders from one end of the garden to the other. Figures and fountains complete these parterres in the original design, but the figures have all disappeared. At the further end of the garden are more groves, ornamental bushes and shrubs, which in their turn lead at the other end to the flower-beds where, in his day, the famous Duc de Biron, Marshal of France, grew as much as £8,000 worth of tulips at one time! This part of the garden is now shut off, being occupied by the residence of the late Lady Superior of the convent referred to above. In the near future it will be taken for a lycée for young girls.

This garden has no parallel in the heart of London, its nearest prototype in the past having been the great garden that ran from the back of Northumberland House to the Thames, which was swept away when Northumberland Avenue and the Embankment were constructed.

To the left of the flower-garden is the kitchen-garden, the produce of which was so great that it supplied half the markets of Paris with its fruit and vegetables. Here were planted some of the first peaches, apricots, and nectarines when they came to Europe. Indeed, M. F. d'Andigné, in his report to the Commission Municipale du Vieux Paris, tells us that the Duc de Biron employed no fewer than eighty gardeners, many of whom made fortunes and retired comfortably into private life. Between the two gardens stands a wall more than 600 ft. in length, upon which every kind of wall-fruit then known was cultivated.

In conclusion, it may be of interest to state the very different prices this historic mansion fetched during the course of its existence. The Duchess of Maine first obtained possession of the house from the de Moras family as a tenant for life for the sum of 150,000 livres. At her death it reverted to Mme. de Moras, who sold it to the Duc de Biron for half a million. The last hereditary owner, the Duke's niece by marriage, the Duchesse de Béthune-Charost, handed it over to the Congregation of the Sacré Cœur for 365,000 francs, it being assessed at that time at between 12,000,000 and 15,000,000 francs! The price paid to-day is 8,000,000 francs, just two-thirds of its value ninety

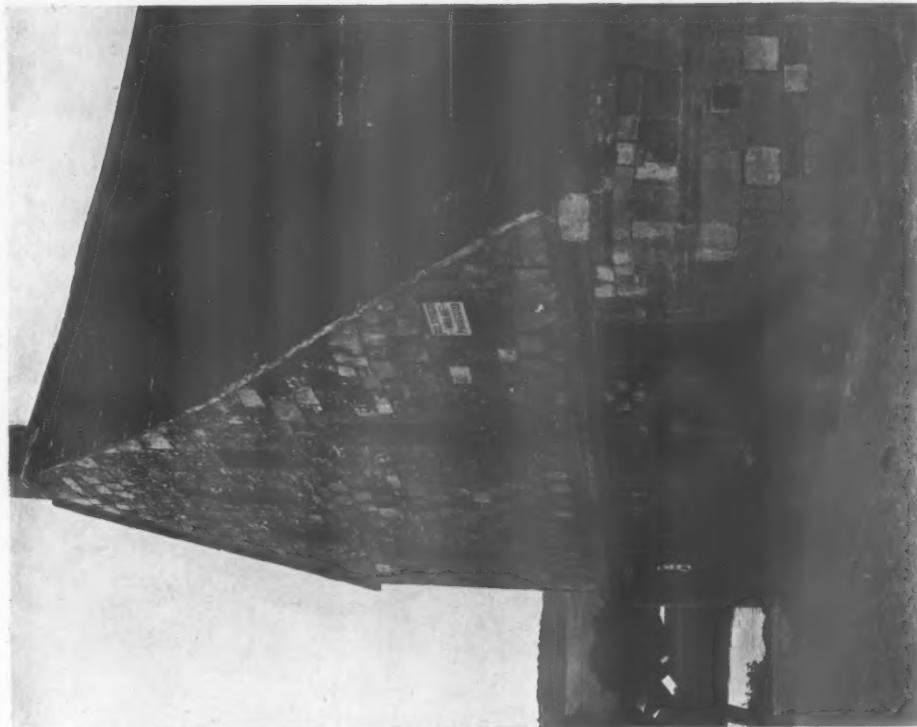
years ago, and it is safe to assume that the State have made a good bargain; for, when restored and thoroughly put in order, the Hôtel Biron cannot fail to attract many thousands of visitors from France and other parts of the world.

## THE PRACTICAL EXEMPLAR OF ARCHITECTURE—LXXIII

No one has ever attempted to deny the manifold influence of material on design—how certain modes of construction are suggested as suitable and others eliminated as unsuitable by certain materials, how ornaments and mouldings become carelessly *flamboyant* or austere at the dictate of material, more than by any mere act of volition. Although modern science has somewhat blunted this susceptibility to material, although nothing comes amiss to the omniscience of the modern architect, it was not always thus. There was more Art if less Science! Yet, at the same time, obvious and necessary as are the influences of material on design, they are not everything. We are apt to lay too much stress on them. For example, it is not the difference between granite and marble that makes the difference between Egyptian and Greek, nor the difference between marble and the sand- and lime-stones that makes the difference between Greek and mediæval architecture. Time has bit deeply into ancient monuments, has riven in sunder the eternal granite, has torn apart and eaten away the smooth surface of the marble columns of Greece, and worked havoc among the aspiring piles of Gothic buildings; so that it seems impossible to associate those styles of architecture with other than the materials through which they, in some manner, achieved their peculiar distinction. The gleaming beauty of that great house wherein Athéné dwelt in solitary splendour, the monstrousness of the pillared halls of Thebes, Luxor, Karnac, the airy grace of a northern cathedral, seem only attainable through the several and customary materials of which they were always built. And although the Greeks sometimes, as in Sicily, built their temples with a rough stone, or the Egyptians used limestone in place of their granite, they could not change the style of their building. Their forms had been fixed long ago by their functions.

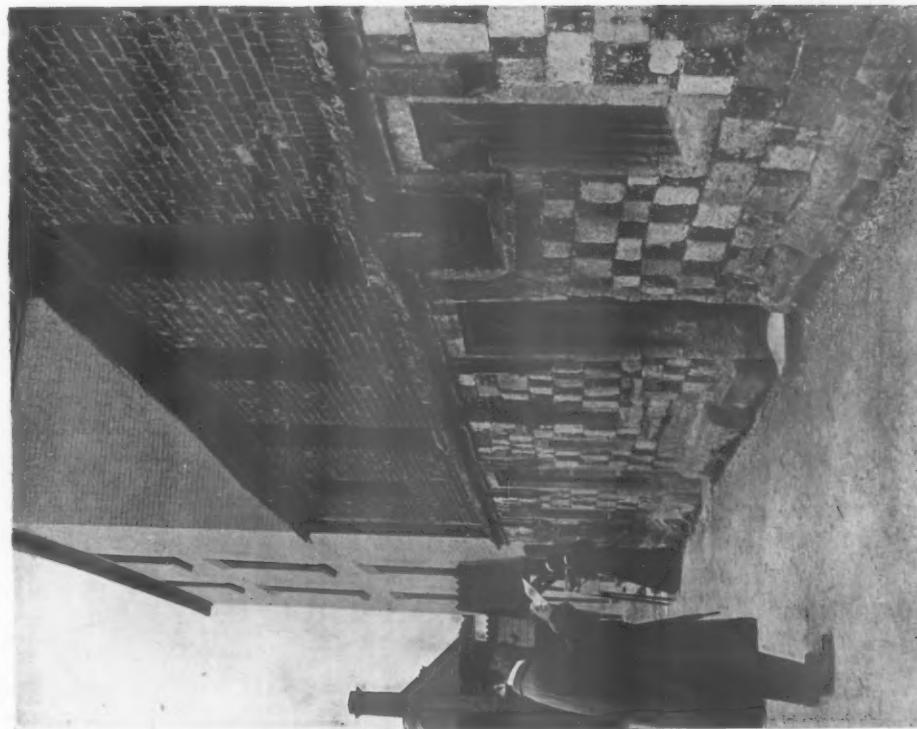
In England, a variety of materials has stamped a variety of styles of building—a Roman feeling of bigness has crept into St. Albans Abbey together with the Roman bricks. Counties where stone is found have their own type of building, just as those which were obliged to use brick have theirs. Again, flint and chalk, timber and plaster,

THE PRACTICAL EXEMPLAR  
OF ARCHITECTURE



Photos: "Architectural Review"

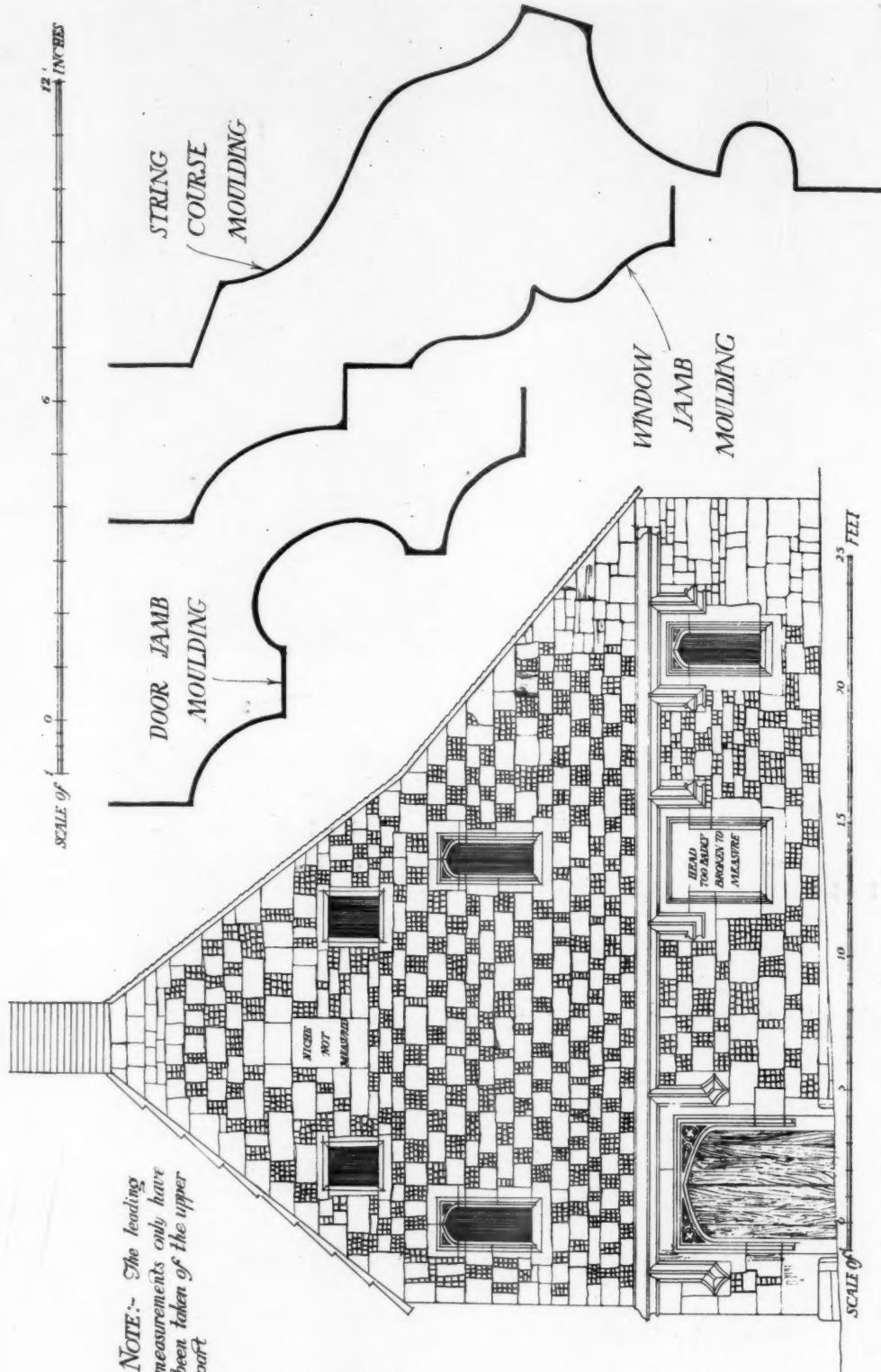
East Elevation



South Elevation

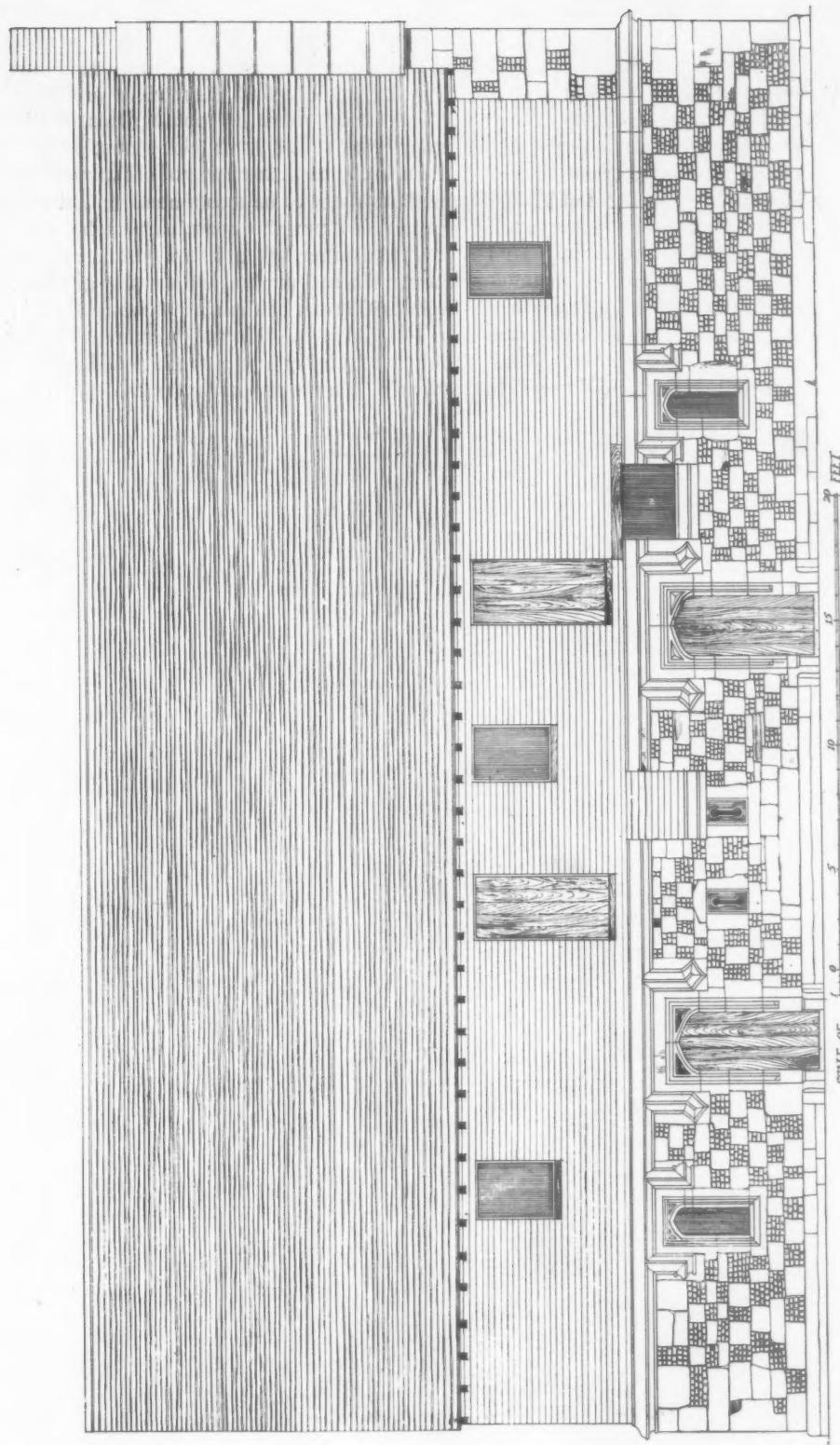
OLD BONE MILL, HARNHAM, SALISBURY

THE PRACTICAL EXEMPLAR  
OF ARCHITECTURE



OLD BONE MILL, HARNHAM, SALISBURY: EAST ELEVATION AND DETAILS  
MEASURED AND DRAWN BY THEO. G. SCOTT

THE PRACTICAL EXEMPLAR  
OF ARCHITECTURE



OLD BONE MILL, FARNHAM, SALISBURY : SOUTH ELEVATION  
MEASURED AND DRAWN BY THEO. G. SCOTT

## THE PRACTICAL EXEMPLAR OF ARCHITECTURE

dictated other treatments. So that in England there is an infinite variety which nothing can stale.

The old Bone Mill at Harnham, near Salisbury, is a most delightful example of diaper work; not, be it understood, as this work is sometimes done—with mechanical precision—but built somewhat irregularly, as the stones were large or small; and with a corresponding increase in interest as the eye is continually surprised by some unexpected and curious juxtaposition of flint and stone. This quality, which gives, more even than the mellowing effect of years, a texture so interesting that mere building often passes into architecture, can scarcely be achieved to-day. Whether it be that nothing short of a vital tradition, which inspires all

workmen alike with one aim, can do this it is difficult to say. About the diversification of these walls and all similar work there is no logical arrangement of which the mind can get hold. It seems as if they happened. And the modern architect must either design and set out squares of flint and stone geometrically, or else consciously devise them in the haphazard way of old work. The first method is not to be recommended, and only with great pains can the consciousness be eliminated from the other, when it may be successful. Of course, the real method is to employ an old country builder if he can be found, who would do it in some half-forgotten traditional manner. In this way only, that kindly human feeling will be got into the stone, making it almost sentient. J. M. W. H.



NEW EXAMINATION HALL FOR THE ROYAL COLLEGES OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS  
QUEEN SQUARE, BLOOMSBURY, LONDON, W.C.: DETAIL OF ENTRANCE AND LOWER PORTION OF FAÇADE  
ANDREW N. PRENTICE, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT

Photo: "Architectural Review."

## CURRENT ARCHITECTURE

### NEW EXAMINATION HALL, QUEEN SQUARE, BLOOMSBURY

QUEEN SQUARE, Bloomsbury, is a half-forgotten space in West-Central London. It can be entered from all four sides, the streets that lead up to it from Theobald's Road presenting rather pathetic examples of houses fallen from a once prosperous estate. The square itself has the appearance of a somewhat faded glory, more particularly by reason of the intrusion of public buildings into what was originally an exclusively domestic haven. The Italian Hospital occupies most of the south side, and an ear and throat hospital has been built on the east side. On the west side, centrally placed, is the New Examination Hall of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, recently completed from designs by Mr. Andrew N. Prentice, F.R.I.B.A. This building was designed to supersede the examination hall and premises for the Imperial Cancer Research Fund on the Victoria Embankment. It has a very high façade, and as the trees in the square grow right over the roadway it has been found impossible to get a satisfactory photograph of the entire front. The two views showing the lower portion of the façade and a detail of the upper part suffice, however, in conjunction with the perspective view, to give a fairly complete representation of the work.

It will be seen that the ground-floor storey is arcaded and carried out in stone, while the storeys



NEW EXAMINATION HALL,  
QUEEN SQUARE, BLOOMSBURY

September 1912



Photo: "Architectural Review"

NEW EXAMINATION HALL,  
QUEEN SQUARE, BLOOMSBURY :  
DETAIL OF UPPER PART OF FAÇADE

above are executed in brickwork. Wide stone pilasters and a strong cornice frame in the windows of the first, second, and third floors, and at the top floor level some well-designed stone vases and decorative carving add a touch of richness to the building.

The main entrance leads into a vestibule vaulted in plaster, with secretary's office, clerks' office, and porter's office to the right and a large committee-room to the left; in the latter is the chimneypiece illustrated on page 158; it is of wood painted white with a marble surround to the firegrate. A corridor runs at right angles to the

## CURRENT ARCHITECTURE



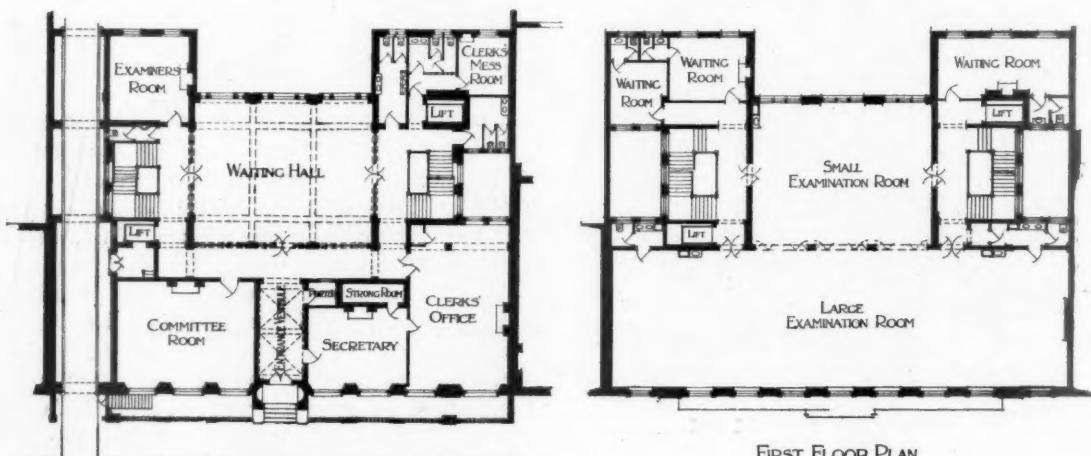
*Photo: "Architectural Review"*

CHIMNEYPEICE IN COMMITTEE ROOM

entrance vestibule and extends on either side around a large waiting-hall which is lighted from the rear by three windows enlivened by some coats-of-arms in stained glass. From the corridor around the waiting-hall access is given to the staircases and lifts on either side that serve the upper floors and the basement. Cloak-rooms and accommodation for the caretaker are provided in the basement, general examination rooms on the first and second floors, physical, anatomical, and

chemical examination rooms on the third floor, while the fourth and fifth floors are occupied by the Imperial Cancer Research Fund.

The general contractors for the building were Messrs. Holland & Hannen, of Bloomsbury. The Portland stone was supplied and fixed by Mr. F. J. Barnes, and the facing bricks were supplied by Messrs. Thomas Lawrence. The stone and wood carving and the enriched plaster-work was executed by Mr. Gilbert Seale. The



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

NEW EXAMINATION HALL, QUEEN SQUARE, BLOOMSBURY. ANDREW N. PRENTICE, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE



Large Examination Room, First Floor



Waiting Hall, Ground Floor

Photos: "Architectural Review"

NEW EXAMINATION HALL, QUEEN SQUARE, BLOOMSBURY, LONDON, W.C.  
ANDREW N. PRENTICE, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE



*Photo: "Architectural Review"*

NEW EXAMINATION HALL, QUEEN SQUARE, BLOOMSBURY, LONDON:  
VIEW OF STAIRCASE FROM SMALL EXAMINATION ROOM  
ANDREW N. PRENTICE, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT

## CURRENT ARCHITECTURE

wood-block flooring (of teak) was laid by Messrs. the Excellence Wood Block Flooring Co., on their patent dovetailed groove system. Lifts were supplied by Messrs. R. Waygood & Co., Ltd.; they include electric passenger and goods lifts, and a hand lift. The exterior electric-light fittings are by Messrs. Spital & Clark, and the interior fittings by Messrs. Strode & Co., who also executed the electric wiring. The door furniture was supplied by Messrs. Charles Smith, Sons & Co., Ltd. Among other sub-contractors were the following:—

Asphalt work, Wm. Salter, Edwards & Co.; tiles to cloak-rooms, Martin Van Straaten; plumbing and sanitary work, Matthew Hall & Co.; terrazzo flooring, Burke & Co.; leaded lights, Farmilee & Co.; wrought-iron balcony and entrance gates, Thomas Elsley, Ltd.; heating and ventilating, James Boyd & Sons.

### NEW STATIONS AT HARROW AND PINNER

IN the new stations at Harrow and Pinner Mr. Horsley has produced two very pleasing buildings. Each is developed from a straightforward plan comprising a good-sized booking-hall, with cloak-room and storage for bicycles adjoining, and the usual conveniences.

The Harrow station is built on the Wealdstone side of the line, and is part of the enlargement of the whole station buildings. A large luggage and foot bridge has been built by the railway company across the line, and this gave an opportunity for the addition of the tower, which contains the lift and its machinery as well as the clock.



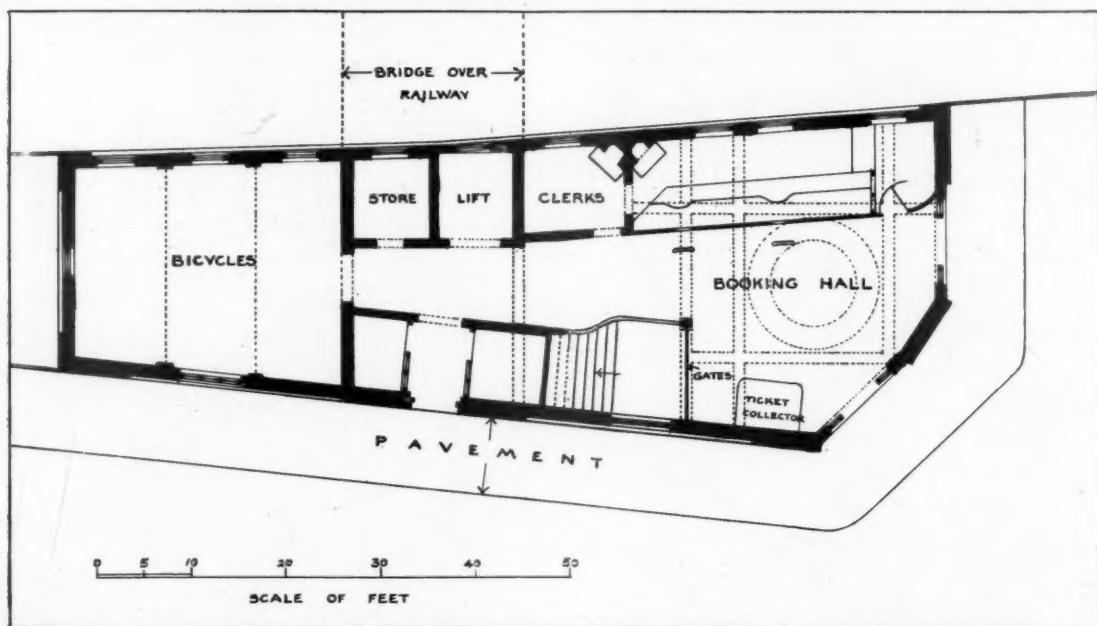
Photo: Cyril Ellis

HARROW AND WEALDSTONE STATION (LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY)  
GERALD C. HORSLEY, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE

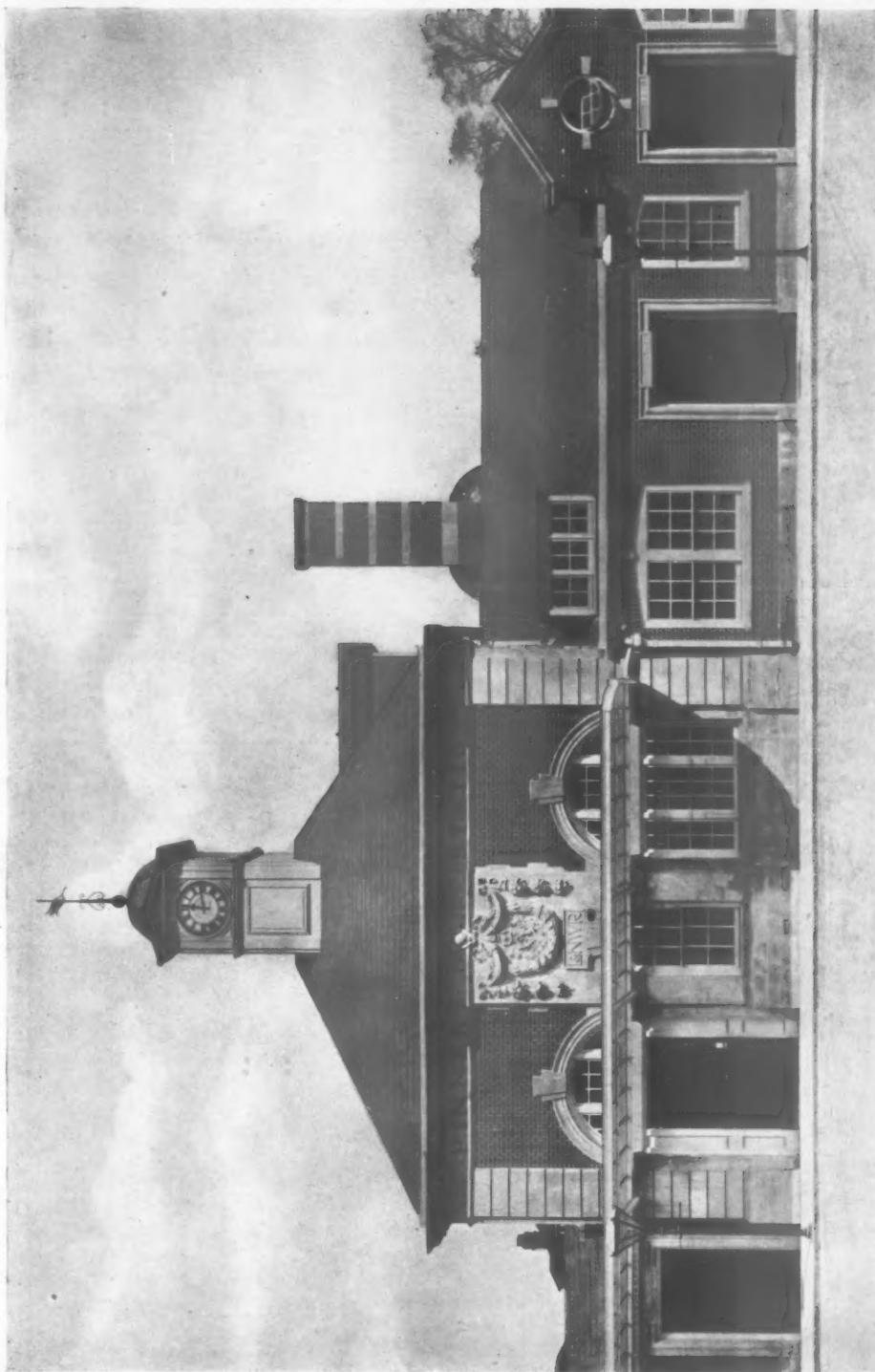


Photo : Cyril Ellis



HARROW AND WEALDSTONE STATION (LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY)  
GERALD C. HORSLEY, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT

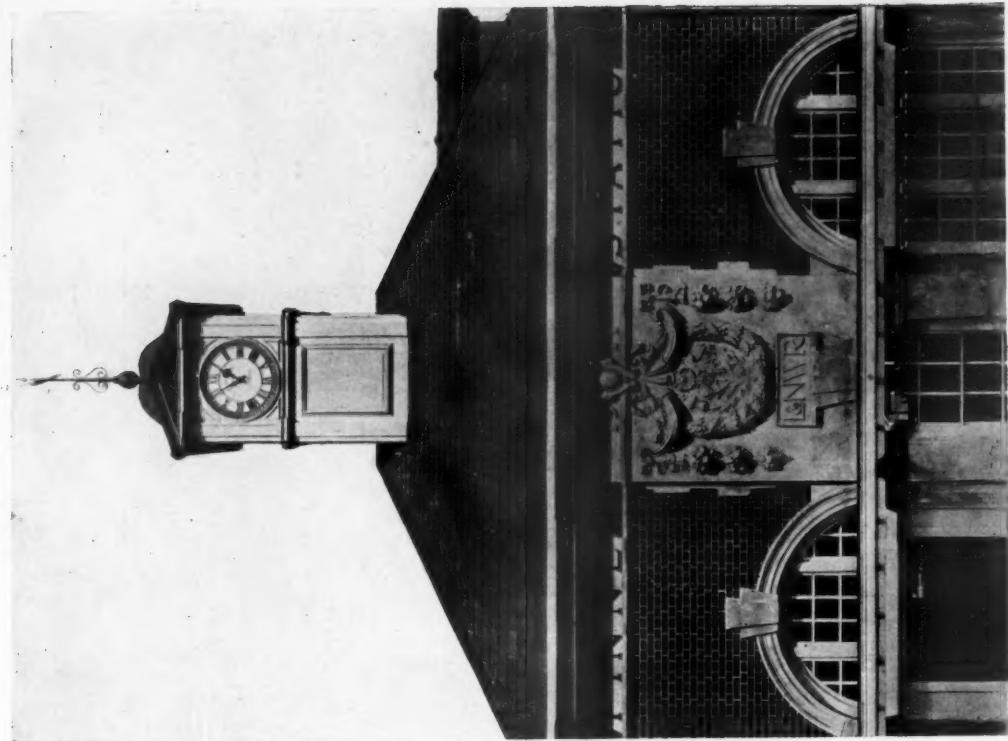
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*Photo: Cyril Ellis*

PINNER STATION (LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY)  
GERALD C. HORSLEY, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT

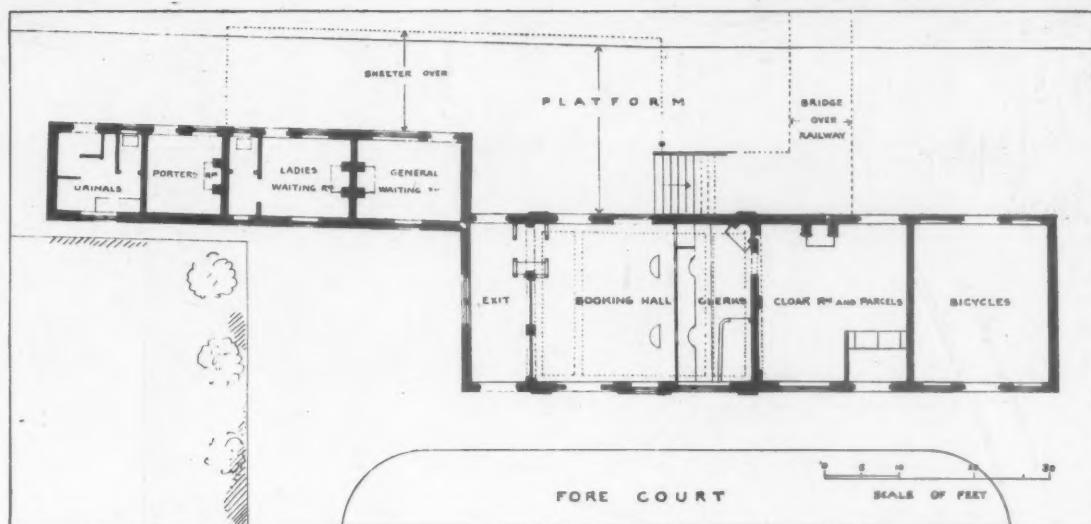
CURRENT ARCHITECTURE



Photos : Cyril Ellis



NEW STATIONS AT HARROW AND PINNER : DETAIL VIEWS  
GERALD C. HORSLEY, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT



PINNER STATION  
GERALD C. HORSLEY, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT

The booking hall has a domed light centrally placed.

The Pinner building is also part of a general enlargement scheme, and here again the booking-hall is lofty and constructed with a coved ceiling.

The buildings are carried out in Portland stone and red brick with green slate roofs.

Messrs. Higgs & Hill, Ltd., of Lambeth, were the general contractors for the Harrow station, and Messrs. Holliday & Greenwood, Ltd., for the Pinner station. Bricks for both were supplied by Messrs. Thomas Lawrence & Sons, and lifts by Messrs. R. Waygood & Co., Ltd. The stone-carving was executed by Messrs. W. Aumonier & Son, and the clocks were installed by the Synchronome Clock Co.

#### THE MONTGOMERYSHIRE INFIRMARY, NEWTOWN, NORTH WALES

HOSPITAL work in Newtown has been carried on for several years in temporary premises overlooking the Severn. The new building has been erected on a site across the river just outside the town.

The infirmary is the outcome of a limited competition, and has been built from the design of Mr. Hastwell Grayson, M.A., F.R.I.B.A., and Messrs. Shepheard & Bower—all of Liverpool—joint architects. There is accommodation for twenty beds in four wards, an operating theatre, an outpatients' department, and a board-room. Adjoining, but separate from the outpatients' department, is a tuberculosis dispensary, the gift of the chairman of the Welsh National Crusade against Consumption, and intended to be worked by and under the control of the Welsh National Committee. In spite of its somewhat sonorous name, the Newtown Infirmary is little more than

a cottage hospital. It serves a beautiful county, but one of the poorest and most thinly populated in Wales, and could not have been built without most liberal help from Mr. David Davies, M.P., and his family. The total cost was between £5,000 and £6,000, not including the value of the site—a gift from Mr. E. Powell. The cottage character has been maintained as far as possible, both externally and internally. The fittings are simple. Trunks and ducts, always difficult to keep clean and generally forgotten, are nearly eliminated. Rustic bricks made with an excellent variation of colour have been used externally. They were supplied by Messrs. Wilson & Williams, of Buckley. What little stone there is came from Grinshill. The ward windows, except those under the verandas, were supplied and fixed by the Chaddock Co., whose patent allows the maximum volume of air to pass in and out. The doors to the wards and a few other rooms are covered with flush oiled teak, and were made by Messrs. J. P. White & Sons, Ltd., of Bedford. The flooring, partly terrazzo and partly patent composition, was carried out by Messrs. Art Pavements & Decorations, Ltd., the heating by Messrs. Killick and Cochran, of Liverpool, and the hot-water supply by Messrs. W. Griffiths & Sons, of Liverpool. Messrs. John Bolding & Sons, Ltd., were responsible for the sanitary fittings. The general contractors were Messrs. Treasure & Sons, Ltd., of Shrewsbury.

#### THAMES HOUSE, LONDON, E.C.

IN the description of this building given in the August issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW it should have been stated that Messrs. Higgins & Griffiths not only supplied electric-light fittings, but carried out the entire electric-light installation.

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE



*Photo: Thomas Lewis*

THE MONTGOMERYSHIRE INFIRMARY, NEWTOWN, NORTH WALES: VIEW OF FORECOURT  
HASTWELL GRAYSON, M.A., F.R.I.B.A., AND SHEPHEARD & BOWER, JOINT ARCHITECTS

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE



Rear View

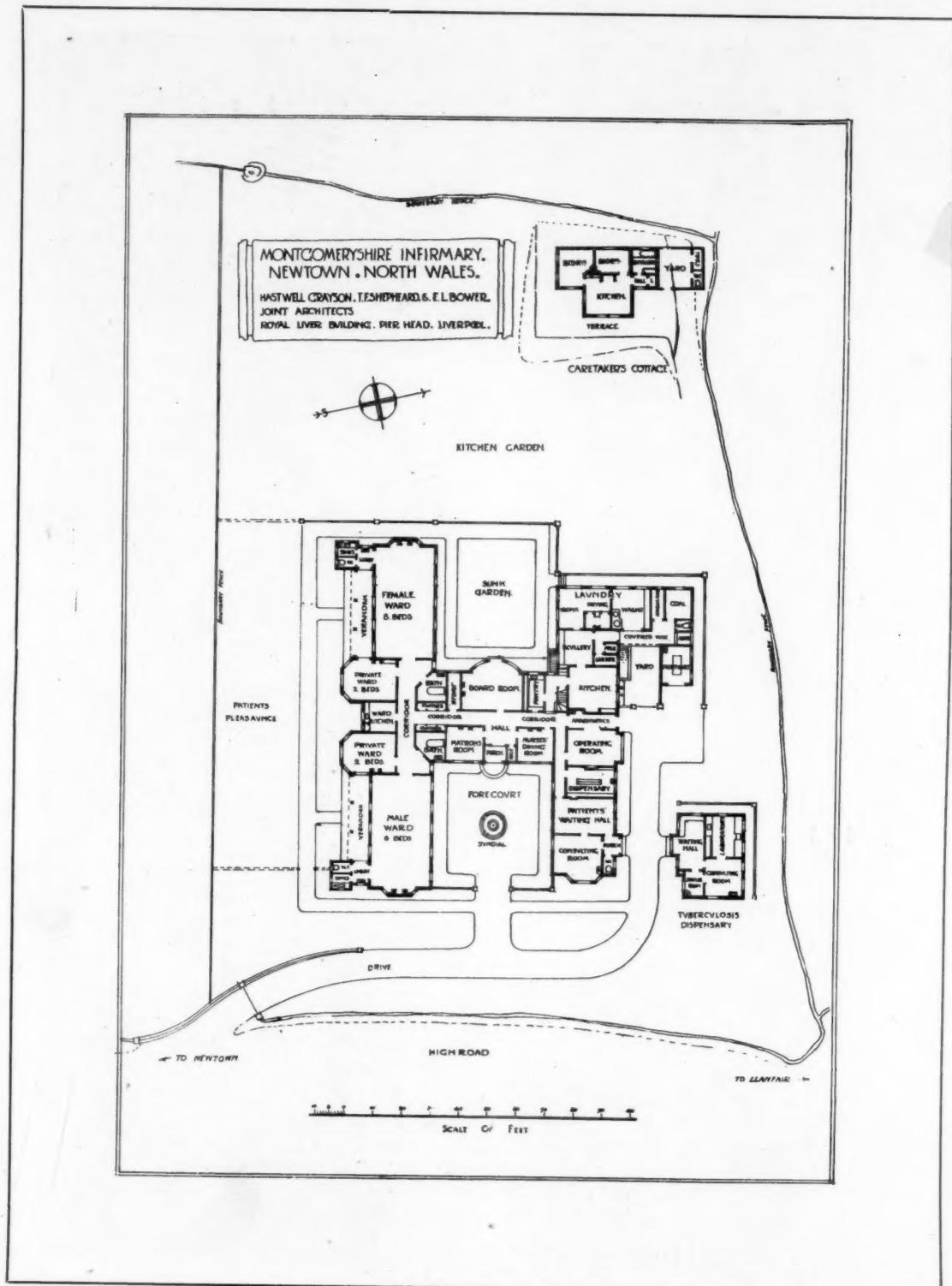


General View of Front

Photos : Thomas Lewis

THE MONTGOMERYSHIRE INFIRMARY, NEWTOWN, NORTH WALES  
HASTWELL GRAYSON, M.A., F.R.I.B.A., AND SHEPHEARD & BOWER, JOINT ARCHITECTS

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE



## THE LIVERPOOL CUSTOM HOUSE

THE proposal to provide Liverpool with a new Custom House draws attention to the architectural importance of the old building, which is the chief work of John Foster, F.R.S., a prominent architect at the time of the Greek revival. Foster, who was born in Liverpool about 1787, was the son of a builder and surveyor to the Corporation of the city. His early professional training was gained in the office of his father, and he afterwards studied in the London offices of James and Jeffry Wyatt. Becoming acquainted with Cockerell, he joined him in many expeditions for the purpose of archaeological research, visiting Athens in 1810. In 1814 he returned to Liverpool, to which city he was appointed architect and surveyor as his father had been before him. The foundation-stone of the Custom House was laid on August 12th, 1828. The structure is built upon the site of the old dock, the original centre of Liverpool commerce. The filling up of the dock and the preparation of the surrounding area, now Canning Place, involved the huge sum of £180,000; but the conviction (falsified in the event) that the whole maritime business quarter of the city would group itself around the selected site apparently justified the expenditure at the time. The commercial quarter, however, has since moved steadily northward, leaving the Custom House isolated among warehouses and small shops in a comparatively useless condition. The cost of the building when finished (exclusive of site value,



WEST FRONT

etc.) was exactly £250,000. The shape of the building on plan is that of a wide H, the longitudinal axis running from north-east to south-west. The internal planning, before the numerous modern alterations were made, was symmetrical, but even then it was far from satisfactory. There are innumerable dingy ante-chambers, the intended use of which it is impossible to judge; staircases are few, and there is a total absence of lifts. Nevertheless, the demolition of the building for these reasons alone would be an act of vandalism. The exterior, built of "park stone" (a local freestone much used in Liverpool at the beginning of the nineteenth century), is really a fine composition, although it lacks the vigour and subtle gradation of surface that is apparent in the work of Elmes and Cockerell. In consequence, there is an appearance of flatness about the design. Its shallow modelling, even surfaces, and delicate profiles—the carefully adjusted ratio of solid and void—all

these refinements are rendered largely ineffective by an accumulated deposit of soot and grime. Foster must have credited his stone with the qualities of Athenian marble, and thought out his design as if it were to be executed in that material. Still, with all its admitted defects, the Liverpool Custom House is massive, austere, and fine in scale. A better site and a different material, and its reputation would have been universal. The great hope of its salvation is that it may be internally reconstructed, and so adapted to the requirements of the present day.



NORTH FRONT  
JOHN FOSTER, ARCHITECT

## ARCHITECTURE FROM THE CLASSIC STANDPOINT

Spirits of forty ages ! be aroused,  
Appear ! ye hover round impalpable,  
But felt, as is the overshadowing cloud ;  
I here appeal as to an oracle :  
Answer the invocation ! dare to tell,  
Who wrought this ruin ? who aroused at last  
The slumbering Nemesis on you ? whose hands fell,  
Fate like, to crush yourselves ? your power who cast  
To dust, to teach once more the present by the past ?

READE.



THE first decade of the twentieth century has gone; we are entered upon the second. What are the signs to be read in the aspect of modern civic art? What lofty ideals are being pursued? Does a standard of taste promise, or do we propose, as a means of architectural expression, to continue the unintelligible jargon of the late nineteenth century?

Such weighty questions need digesting by artists and public alike—their very nature does not permit of a direct answer; but reference to the motto of the late John Gibson: "Learn well the past, use well the present," offers a solution of the problem. Meanwhile the public are awakening to a sense that the majority of modern buildings lack the convincing qualities inherent in those of a past age. The thinking portion of the community, perplexed by the hubbub of controversy and dazzled by each addition to the pyrotechnic display, turns with relief to buildings of human interest. In this regard it is right in obeying its conservative instincts; what else can be expected when the priests in the Temple of Art no longer minister the truth, and false doctrines prevail, the gods having withdrawn their bounty? While the foregoing is true of the architecture of English cities, it does not mean that Englishmen as a whole fail to appreciate a fine building or work of art.

Quite recently a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts said: "The Classic Spirit in England is dead, the English architects no longer construe the antique theme." I am convinced, however, that working immediately beneath the surface there are earnest students, and upon the efforts of these young men, the practitioners of to-morrow, depends the furtherance of the Classic tradition. To rightly understand the meaning of the term "Classic Spirit" is to possess a key to the fuller possibilities of academic architecture.

In the first place it means the sinking of individual display in favour of a general and more logical course; this can be promoted by study at a recognised centre of intelligence, and what better academy exists for the purpose than the whole breadth of the Classic field? Antiquarians have

delved on our behalf, historians have painted word-pictures of the world in its adolescent stage, while our museums are replete with the minutiae of an ideal civilisation. In studying these outward signs of artistic effort we are confronted with something of the forceful genius which directed their evolution; in short, we are brought into contact with the Classic Spirit. The very fact that the earliest of man's attempts at building faithfully reflect the manifestations of nature proves the theosophic idea; gradually, from a crude simplicity, a rich form of art resulted, which, while necessarily embodying the all-pervading laws of nature, was nevertheless able and resourceful. In the fertile soil of Greece the Classic Spirit found nutrition. The Hellenes, in their disinterested search for perfection as well as in their thorough appreciation of clearness and restraint, obeyed the laws governing continuity and permanence. They sought to render their creations noble and eternal.

If Egyptian architecture portrays the unbending officialism of the priests which allowed of no deviation from precedent, that of Greece, while following the same immutable tenets of tradition, permitted the elasticity consonant with progress. This is one of the chief reasons why every notable work of Hellenistic art brings to mind the whole sequence of the works which preceded it; it appears as though the artist endeavoured to incorporate the charm and glory of the past into the work he engaged upon. It was realised that the foundations of the architectural pyramid were deeply and surely laid: no man attempted a rival structure, but all united to complete the one already in progress; stone was added to stone, and so tradition ensued.

We have been accustomed to associate the true character of antique art with the evolution of that phase of Classic architecture which had its beginning in England at the hands of Inigo Jones, and which continued to the middle of the last century. Nothing could be wider of the truth. The standpoint we have to assume at the present time, in regard to the furtherance of the Classic theme, is quite different from that taken either by the school of Burlington or by the Greek enthusiasts of a century ago. But it must not be overlooked that the present movement arises out of the local tradition engendered by the English school of Classicists, and also that an observance of this will materially aid the creation of a modern style.

Among the meditations of Marcus Aurelius is one which states: "Those things which the common sort of people do admire are most of them such things as are very general and may

## ARCHITECTURE FROM THE CLASSIC STANDPOINT

be comprehended under things merely natural, or naturally affected and qualified: as stones, wood, figs, vines, olives." Herein we see the difference which exists between the barbarously simple and that rich simplicity begot of intellect; in other words, the gradual building-up of a tradition which always precedes its vitalising or culminating stage. Compare the renderings of the Classic theme at the hands of Inigo Jones or Sir Christopher Wren with the polished essays of Cockerell; the former are fine in their way, but they are not so truly sympathetic with the Classic Spirit as the latter are.

When we give up the cult of the five Orders, usually interpreted in a spirit of pedantry, when we finally throw off the shackles of insularity in favour of cosmopolitanism, and, further, when we approach problems of architecture in a spirit of modernity, then, and not till then, will English art progress.

Reasoning is the basis of design; not that stubborn form of argument demanding that every element shall truthfully speak of construction, but rather that form of logic which allows of any arrangement of minor parts so long as they punctuate the dominant idea.

The Classic Spirit is above such trivialities as counterfeit reasoning. I will not go so far as to say that discipline in the study of the Orders and other features of Classic art is not beneficent to the young student; he must perforce tread the path others have used before him in order to realise the underlying principles. His secondary study will be to understand the interpenetration and fusion of motifs; to grasp the finesse and subtleties of the great works of architecture; to make himself familiar with the aspirations of those who evolved style throughout the ages. And finally, with his mind stored with this information, and thoroughly conversant with the theory of architecture, to make his first attempt as a designer.

### DESIGN AND COMPOSITION

Design is the offspring of imitation, emulation is the mother of originality. The prehistoric cave dwellers of Western France who shaped the tusk of the mammoth into a grotesque caricature of that monster, and in like manner who fashioned a dagger of reindeer horn with a hilt formed into a semblance of the animal, its legs doubled under its body and its antlers lying along the back, consciously began the art of design. They did more than merely imitate: they were original, and in shaping a natural object into a representation of the chase they imparted to the weapon that indispensable attribute—correctness and sympathy of character. The greatest fault of

modern art is the relative neglect of studied composition. Designs, both in plan and elevation, no longer possess the deep qualities of latent geometry which formerly constituted the architectural basis. What is design but a studied unity of parts, the assembling into a picture of subordinate objects of interest, in turn supporting and accentuating the primary object of greatest interest? —in architecture the patterning of a plan, the grouping of fenestration, the panelling of surfaces, the domination of a dome or cornice. The relative merit of design, in works both great and small, depends on the earnestness of the artist. Likewise, design is the principle of the Classic Spirit, that sheer joyousness of living, with its concomitant keenness of perception, the love of clear-headed reasoning; it is reluctant to deviate from the well-tried path, it clings to the mantle of tradition.

To-day the number of architects who are entitled to rank as composers are few. In these decadent years we are too prone to worship at the shrine of passing fashion. We rush out into the street and seize upon the latest idea. We have neither the eyes to see nor the power to discriminate between the real and the evanescent. True artistic impulse is sleeping.

Although design is founded on natural laws, thousand of years have changed our outlook; we now view nature focused in a mirror. The complex character of modern conditions no longer allows us to build with the barbarous simplicity of uncivilised beings, neither can we hope to live again the lives of the Athenians. We have long since forsaken the primitive age, we cannot go directly back to nature; but we can and must study the rich simplicity to be found in the arts of the Classic world, for the very conditions which produced them approximate to the conventions of to-day. We need to study and perfect the principles ruling intellectual architecture: to assimilate the laws of symmetry, axiality, harmony, and balance: to appreciate the value of style, and, what is of paramount importance, to fully understand the impartation of character.

Character and style are among the subtleties of artistic endeavour, and a knowledge of both is essential for a work of art of the first degree. A factory for the manufacture of woollen goods must bear the impress of its purpose in every line; a round-house for storing locomotive engines must possess something of the character of the machines at rest; a church should be a sermon in the concrete; a bank should inspire confidence; and so through the whole category.

But it may well be asked, How is character to be revealed? Why can't we continue in the old groove? Is not architecture primarily an art of

building? What better than to dress it up in tawdry finery, fruity festoons in season, laurel bands and bonbons in stone? *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; the sham methods enunciated above no longer hold good; we have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The simplicity of Georgian architecture made special appeal to minds escaping from the thraldom of smug Victorianism. Their Gothic confessors had forbidden intercourse with paganism; but here was something not quite heathen, something which had escaped from the Gothic fold and which might be reclaimed. For a time a spasmodic outburst of a pseudo Queen Anne style gained adherents; they whispered among themselves, "Hush! this is Classic." Then followed another version, "Hush! Georgian, it is so frightfully easy." It was easy, fatally easy, and architecture conceived with facility is always bad.

If the practice of the arts has fallen upon evil days in this country, the same remark applies to the prevailing conditions on the Continent. France, for centuries the academy of Europe, is allowing the Classic Spirit to be usurped by base modern tendencies; the exponents of architecture—and they are legion—no longer practise the intellectual style of their forbears; the school of Duc, Duban, and Labrouste is ignored for the fooleries of the Grand Palais; the ornamental excrescences of the Gare d'Orléans have captured the imagination of the present generation. For ourselves the reticence of the Anglo-Saxon is our safeguard. About the middle of the eighteenth century, during the evolution of the Rocaille, we alone of the nations kept our heads, and in a great measure the refined English style assisted the finest phase of French contemporary architecture. Now, with the establishment of the British School at Rome, we can look to the future with hope, because the importance of the Classic Spirit to modern architectural development is at length receiving attention.

X.

## BOOKS

### THE COLE MANUSCRIPTS

THE extent to which architectural history is, or may become, indebted to the gentle art of the collector has been at sundry times amply demonstrated—never very much more strikingly, perhaps, than in the results that Mr. J. A. Gotch and Mr. Harrison Townsend have lately revealed before the R.I.B.A. of their examination of various hoarded treasures of architectural drawings. A notable collector of documents—casually rather than specifically architectural—was the Rev. William Cole, who, born in 1714 and dying

in 1782, must have spent a large portion of his life, and probably all the leisure of his maturity, in getting together, arranging, and annotating the papers which have been thought worthy of house-room in the British Museum, and to which the index which has been published by Mr. George J. Gray fills 170 pages. Statutes, charters, extracts from registers, epitaphs, leases, and miscellaneous notes and memoranda such as nowadays one would clip from newspapers, include or are interspersed with many references that, as entered in the index, promise more or less of architectural or at least of archaeological interest; and it is chiefly on this account that we feel justified in calling attention here to Mr. Gray's index, to which an interesting portrait of Mr. Cole is prefixed.

"Index to the Contents of the Cole Manuscripts in the British Museum." By George J. Gray. With a Portrait of Cole. Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes. Price 15s. net. 9 in. by 6 in.

## PRACTICAL DESIGN

THE analysis of ornament, the development of pattern, and similar matters connected with design, have already been dealt with so extensively that one is rather wearied by seeing very much the same sort of thing done over again in a new book. Some such criticism may be made in respect of the book under review, or, rather, against that portion of it (about one-fifth) which is devoted to "plant form as the basis of ornament": for the book sets out to give students some idea of the practical requirements, limitations, and possibilities



CARTOON FOR LEADED LIGHT. BY. J. F. HOGAN  
(From "Modern Practical Design")

which have to be taken into account when designing wall-papers, textiles, pottery, stained glass, jewellery, and a thousand other things that have to be translated into craftwork. The author's dictum in Chapter IV is that the most reasonable position for the writer of a text-book on design is to proceed upon the assumption that the student knows nothing; but, in going back to the first chapter, we hardly see the necessity of explaining that "the flower is that portion of the plant containing the organs of reproduction," and that, as a subsidiary function, it is "the culmination of Nature's ecstasy," "beautifying the earth." But, setting aside this matter, we can proceed profitably through the book, and find set forth in its pages a lucid account of the processes involved in the practical work of the craftsman: every chapter being well illustrated. The author's range extends over a field varied enough to embrace woodcarving and dress-embroidery, stained glass and fashion-plates, book-covers, fans and



COPPER REPOUSSÉ PANEL  
BY HAROLD STABLES

(From "Modern Practical Design")

lace, and posters, and, consequently, we can only expect to find the main points about each, it being intended that the student shall turn to special treatises on the separate subjects in the event of full information being required. The author has chiefly in view the examinations of the Board of Education, and, being himself both an able designer and well practised in the art of instruction, he has been enabled to set down, in a small compass, all the main principles and processes connected with modern practical design. The book is admirably illustrated, the line drawings being particularly well done. Two of the illustrations are here reproduced.

"*Modern Practical Design.*" By G. Woolliscroft Rhead, R.E., Hon. A.R.C.A. Lond. London: B. T. Batsford, 94 High Holborn. Price 7s. 6d. net. 8½ in. by 6 in. 240 pp.

September 1912

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## SMALL HOUSES

WE are continually priding ourselves in the possession of the most delightful houses to be found in any country, and in respect to current work we are eager to point out the paramount position which English domestic architecture occupies. It is disquieting, nevertheless, when we think what a large amount of thoroughly bad work is being done every day, in every town and village; we see it all around us, and the quantity of it makes the modicum of good work seem very ineffectual. Still, there is a steady movement in the right direction, and a better spirit is abroad. The cry of late has been to go back to the countryside, and in garden cities especially there has been a mistaken idea of building cottages which can be considered little better than playthings—and often ridiculous ones at that; indeed, so flagrantly ill-adapted to urban needs have these cottages been that a fresh movement has struck out towards Georgian models, with far better results. And all these attempts have been largely influenced by contemporary publications. There has been a veritable shower of books filled with illustrations and particulars of small houses, and to the already long list have now to be added the four under review. Of these the most imposing is Mr. Maurice B. Adams's. Strictly speaking it is not a new book, being a second edition of a volume issued eight years ago, but it has been so largely altered as to appear quite fresh. Like others of its kind, it presents a large number of plates—eighty-three—of small houses by various well-known architects, but in this case they have not been gathered together haphazard. They represent one particular class of cottage. Work by Mr. Dawber, Mr. Brierley, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Lucas, Mr. Goodhart-Rendel, and other capable architects is presented, as well as a number of small houses by the author, while the descriptive matter discusses the planning of cottages and the details of their equipment. Originally the illustrations were from drawings only, but in the new edition a number of photographic plates are given; these are a great improvement, the drawings being very unconvincing.

Messrs. Seth-Smith and Munro's "Ideal Designs for Houses" has a more commercial look about it. The book shows, in fact, a series of drawings of houses to be erected on St. George's Hill, Weybridge, by Mr. Tarrant. They are of a good type on the whole, and have been carefully planned. Messrs. Tubbs & Messer, Messrs. Castle & Warren, Mr. C. F. A. Voysey, and the authors figure largely as architects.

The third volume is another collection of perspectives and plans of small houses, with a few

photographic illustrations. Houses at Romford and Hampstead are prominently represented, and the cost of some of them is given under the plates. The collection, however, is a miscellaneous one, and the book loses caste by having advertisement pages dispersed throughout it.

Mr. Gordon Allen's book is of a far different character, being a coherent short treatise on small houses, with illustrations of designs by the author—certainly a cheap book for one shilling and sixpence.

"*Modern Cottage Architecture.*" By Maurice B. Adams, F.R.I.B.A. London: B. T. Batsford, 94 High Holborn, W.C. Price 10s. net.

"*Ideal Designs for Houses.*" By Seth-Smith & Munro. London: William J. Baker, 59 Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn, W.C. Price 1s. net.

"*Sixty Designs for Family Houses by Fifty Architects.*" London: William J. Baker, 59 Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn, W.C. Price 1s. net.

"*The Cheap Cottage and Small House.*" By J. Gordon Allen, A.R.I.B.A. Letchworth: Garden City Press, Ltd. Price 1s. 6d. net.

#### THE COMMITTEE FOR THE SURVEY OF THE MEMORIALS OF GREATER LONDON



WHEREVER there is no settled opinion or policy in regard to subjects which offer themselves continually in the business of life there is bound to be confusion, inconsistency, and mischief. The public mind is still in a chaotic condition in respect to the question which is the burden of these columns—the preservation of ancient buildings. There is much discursive talk in the papers, frequent metaphoric holding up of hands, and even imprecations upon the heads of the destroyers. But the public has no clear lead; people are ignorant of the value of ancient stone, brick, and timber, and schemes of rebuilding and the clearing of sites are generally too far advanced to receive any check from protests. The Royal Commission is scheduling the buildings which it is desirable to save, but who among the general public is in the habit of turning to the findings of Royal Commissions? And even here they might look in vain. The work of the Commission will take a quarter or perhaps half a century to complete, and meanwhile monuments die daily, besides which the date limit of 1700 refuses shelter or protection to a vast number of the later works, the loss of which would be a national

calamity. Personally we are little in favour of the multiplication of Government departments, but it is possible that until the Commission assumes that dignity, or until it creates the necessity for a department whose duties will be exclusively with our national memorials, we shall find that the ordinary man will not realise the A B C of the subject. It will, at any rate, be agreed that a department armed with official powers is more useful in preventing evils than in ordinary productive work. The official mind, which is timid of enterprise, or which discourages development by its involved systems of "red tape," becomes, on the other hand, a most active agency when it is turned to the work of prohibition and restraint. Its powers, if limited only to the eminently official quality of delay, would be a godsend where the life of valuable historical evidences hangs in the balance. As it is, we have the curious spectacle of official departments without any clear instructions, and bodies like H.M. Office of Works divided into two camps, the one eager to preserve, the other preparing plans to destroy. We refer, of course, to the projected new offices for the Board of Trade which will involve the destruction of some most interesting Georgian buildings at the back of Inigo Jones's Banqueting House. The fault lies in the fact that there is no clearly enunciated policy, no recognised rule which could only be contravened under the pressure of great necessity.

Is this subject of so little importance that governments cannot turn their attention to it, nor find time to pronounce a verdict one way or another? There is enough sentiment—though often misplaced—and enough interest in the people at large to be turned to proper account if there were also a clear guidance in these matters. Such bodies as the Croydon County Council should have to show overwhelming evidence of necessity before they could suggest the destruction of Archbishop Whitgift's Hospital—so munificent a gift to so ungrateful a town. Even the Port of London should have sought high and low for a site that should not render necessary the banishment of the merchant houses of Catherine Court and its neighbouring streets. Was it really necessary in a city as rich as London that Christ's Hospital should make way for the new Post Office, and must the Foundling Hospital fall because of a laudable desire for central buildings for the London University? Government and the political machine is perhaps naturally engrossed with measures that appeal to the voter, and as long as ancient buildings are among the disfranchised portion of the universe we are afraid our hopes for a clear policy will have to wait long for fulfilment.

WALTER H. GODFREY.